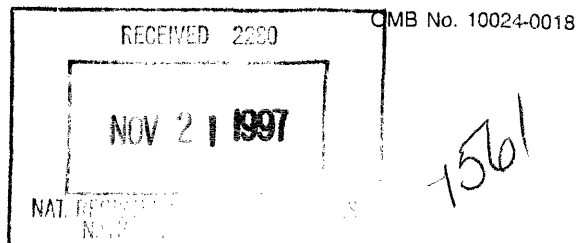


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Potts Plantation

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Both sides of Smith Road N/A ☐ not for publication

city or town Cornelius ☒ vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Mecklenburg code 119 zip code 28031

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National Register.
- ☐ other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall

1/5/98

Potts Plantation
Name of Property

Mecklenburg County, NC
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)
☒ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
11	9	buildings
12		sites
4		structures
		objects
27	9	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Historic and Architectural Resources of
Rural Mecklenburg County, NC

-0-

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
DOMESTIC/secondary structure
AGRICULTURE/processing
AGRICULTURE/storage
AGRICULTURE/agricultural field
FUNERARY/cemetery

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
DOMESTIC/secondary structure
AGRICULTURE/processing
AGRICULTURE/agricultural field
AGRICULTURE/animal facility
FUNERARY/cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Federal
Late Victorian
Colonial Revival
Other: traditional farm building patterns

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
walls Wood
Brick
roof Asphalt
other Metal
Wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet.

Potts Plantation
Name of Property

Mecklenburg County, NC
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☒ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture

Architecture

Archaeology: historic/non-aboriginal

Social History

Ethnic Heritage: European

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Period of Significance

1753-1947

Significant Dates

1811

1812

1947

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Potts, Robert, Jr.

Cultural Affiliation

African American

European American

Architect/Builder

McGee, Jack--builder

NC Division of Archives and History

Potts Plantation
Name of Property

Mecklenburg County, NC
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 510.74 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	17	513180	3925840
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2	17	514850	3927240

3	17	515320	3926920
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4	17	515710	3925190

☒ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

5.17 514270 3925030

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Davyd Foard Hood

organization _____ date 10 April 1997

street & number Isinglass, 6907 Old Shelby Road telephone 704/462-4331

city or town Vale state N.C. zip code 28168

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name See continuation sheet.

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 1

Narrative Description

The Potts Plantation, comprising 510.74 acres of woodlands, fields, pastures, house grounds, and waterways, together with thirty-six buildings, structures, and sites, is located in northwest Mecklenburg County on the headwaters of the Rocky River. The plantation lies at the east edge of the small town of Cornelius, whose town limits incorporate the west edge of the district, and immediately south of the town of Davidson, whose city limit carries along the north boundary of the property. While bordered by two small towns and the dense development around nearby Lake Norman, the landscape of the Potts Plantation remains entirely rural and agrarian in appearance, in part, because of the mature, mostly hardwood woodlands which essentially encircle the property. In other instances, the number of deteriorated buildings and architectural ruins (counted herein as components of seven contributing sites), which have been abandoned or storm-damaged, would suggest an air of desolation or neglect; here, however, their very existence contributes to the air of gravity, stillness, and a palpable sense of history which marks a place occupied for 244 years by a single family, their slaves, and their tenants. This 510-acre tract is the residual part of the 636-acre tract acquired by John Potts in 1753 which remains in the undivided ownership of his great-great-great-granddaughters who live on the plantation with their families.

This remarkable cultural landscape, punctuated by buildings dating from 1811 to 1996, recalls and represents the complete cycle of occupation and agricultural development from its initial acquisition by the family in 1753 to the present. Potential historic archaeological sites on these acres are expected to yield critical information on the initial occupation and settlement period (1753-1810). The plantation seat, erected in 1811, related buildings and resources, represent and recall the plantation period (1811-ca. 1875) when a small group of slaves worked the fields of the plantation, and after the Civil War, several are believed to have stayed on as paid laborers, probably living in their former quarters. A larger group of resources recall and represent the period of farm tenancy and dispersed agriculture from ca. 1875 to 1961; five separate tenant farms on the former plantation lands are recalled by buildings and architectural ruins, including four houses. A second family dwelling erected ca. 1891 reflects a parallel interfamily division of agricultural operations within the boundaries of the ancestral holding; a third family dwelling (#29) was added in 1957. In 1961 the death of Charles Celester Hunter, Clifton Eugene Smith's son-in-law and farm manager, marked the end of the tenancy era and the beginning of the fourth stage in the agricultural history of the property, the period of the gentleman farmer (1961-1980) which had been presaged in 1947 by Mr. Smith's renovation of the family seat. A fourth family residence (#31) was erected by Mr. Smith's younger daughter in 1964-1965. The final, fifth, and present

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 2

stage of agricultural operations here, cash crop farming was initiated in 1980 when Charles Eugene Hunter returned to the farm and began raising soybeans, small grains, and hay. This period is reflected in a small group of mainly storage buildings and a fifth family residence (#35) built in 1993.

The plantation's physical link with its community is Smith Road, which begins off the west side of US 115 (South Main Street) in Cornelius, extends easterly past Mt. Zion United Methodist Church into the plantation grounds where it continues as a private farm lane. Pine Road, a residential street in Davidson, extends south from NC 73 to terminate at a north border of the plantation. Although the plantation is flanked by two municipalities and lays near the dense developments which have grown up around nearby Lake Norman in the last dozen years or so, it is entirely rural in feeling and character. The only real indication of modern activity are two high voltage power lines, with attendant rights of way, which pass through the center of the plantation on a north/south axis, and the south quadrant on an east/west axis. An underground transcontinental pipeline also extends across the plantation on a generally parallel path with the north/south power line. While the power lines are visibly present, they are outside the view of the principal buildings and in no way compromise the rural feeling of the Potts Plantation. The acreage lies astride two streams which merge within the plantation to form the South Prong of the Rocky River and is gently rolling in character.

The arrangement of fields, pastures, and woodlands reflects historic and post-prehistoric field patterns and is entirely natural and informal in feeling and character. So, too, is the arrangement of buildings and structures through the property. A significant group of the post-1947 resources enjoy a relationship to Smith Road which carries easterly, in an almost straight line from US 115 (South Main Street), through the cemetery of Mt. Zion United Methodist Church, and into the plantation where it terminates in front of the Smith Cottage (#20). This narrow paved road, originally a public road to its end at the cottage, now ceases to be a public road about midway into the plantation, at a point between the Hunter house (#31) and the plantation seat (#3) which face onto it as does the Whisnant house (#29) and the Workman house (#35). At the east end of the pavement, at the Smith Cottage, a series of farm lanes carry into the heart of the plantation and to its fields on the southwest side of the Rocky River headwater. The principal farm outbuildings, the complexes at the Smith Cottage and its barn, three of the tenant farm complexes, and about one-half of the cultivated fields are served by the old road and these lanes. The lane which once carried south to tenant house #1 (#11) has disappeared.

In years gone by there was a plantation bridge across the South Prong of the Rocky River that linked the lands lying on both sides of the river; however, it is lost. Today the fields and woodlands on the northeast side of the river

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 7 Page 3

are reached by Pine Road which terminates at the plantation boundary. A farm lane carries from the end of the road past the granary (#18) and ruined barn, marking the site of tenant farm #5 (#17), to a large cultivated field near the east edge of the plantation. The plantation's slave cemetery (#10) is also located here on the property northeast of the river. An old roadway is visible along the edge of the cemetery, within the woods; however, its probable connection to Pine Road is now lost.

Twenty-seven contributing buildings, sites, and structures are located within the district together with nine noncontributing buildings. These range in date from 1811 to 1996. The majority are of frame construction and virtually all of the farm buildings are traditional unpainted outbuildings with sheet-metal roofs. The plantation seat (#3) is an important example of Federal/Colonial Revival architecture in Mecklenburg County and its contemporary log barn (#7) and smokehouse (#4) are typical of early-nineteenth century log construction in the Piedmont. The majority of the resources, including the Smith Cottage (#20), all four of the surviving, tenant houses, and most of the farm outbuildings, date to the last decades of the nineteenth century and the opening decades of this century. These frame buildings reflect traditional building practices and craftsmanship. Two of the nine noncontributing buildings, the Whisnant house (#29) and the Hunter house (#31) are Colonial Revival-style one-story brick-veneer houses built in 1957 and 1964-1965, respectively. Six of the nine noncontributing buildings, including the Colonial Revival-style Workman house (#35) of 1993, were erected after 1975; the last of these nine noncontributing buildings is a log house (#30) which was moved onto the yard of the Hunter house where it was to be restored.

Changes in agricultural practices, particularly the end of the tenant farming system, the use of large-scale machinery, and the raising of large cash crops that are taken directly from the fields to buyers, have spelled the ongoing demise of traditional small-scale farm outbuildings. They have been abandoned and are falling into ruin, becoming, thereby, components of contributing historic archaeology sites (#7, #11, #13, #15-#17). The storms which accompanied Hurricane Hugo in September 1989 also damaged some of these buildings which, no longer used, were not repaired. The plantation seat domestic grounds (#2), the Smith cottage complex (#19), and the Smith cottage barn work area (#23) are contributing sites which include buildings that are either in use and occupied, or in fair condition. Graves of three generations of the Potts family whose lives span the period from 1864 to 1975 are located in the Potts cemetery (#28). The slave cemetery (#10) contains the graves of family slaves (and perhaps some of their descendants who chose to be buried there); it is located in the woodland to the northeast of the Rocky River and marked by depressions and an expansive growth of periwinkle which has escaped beyond its bounds. The overall plantation landscape (#1) encompassing all of these resources constitutes the twelfth contributing site.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 7 Page 4

Today, 102 acres of the total 510 acres are in cultivation. Clearings around the houses and outbuildings constitute some twenty acres and about thirty-five acres are in pasture; the remainder is largely woodland. The fields being cultivated today are located in four general areas, two on each side of the river, and they are virtually enclosed by the plantation's woodland border. The only exception is the pair of fields at the west edge of the property and on the south side of Smith Road; the three houses presently occupied by the family overlook them. The second group of fields on the south side of the river is more irregular in shape. It is situated in the vicinity of three former tenant farms (#13, #15, #16) and represents the combination of those farms's small fields into three larger fields for cash crop production. This grouping also includes a large irregular meadow, formerly a cotton field, which drops down toward the river. The principal surviving pasture, now having the appearance of a meadow, lies on the north side of the Smith cottage barn work area (#23) and it, too, drops northward to the Rocky River. This terraced pasture is a part of the land associated with the farming operations at the Smith cottage from 1891/1898 to 1946 and with the beef cattle operation. On the north side of the Rocky River the two cultivated areas are served by Davidson's Pine Road. A cluster of three fields at the end of Pine Road, adjoining the plantation's fifth tenant complex (#17) also represents the adaption of the small former tenant acreage into fields for cash crop farming. The plantation's fourth major field group is a large single field with an offset on the southwest; it is located at the north edge of the plantation and its north edge carries along the property boundary and the Davidson town line.

INVENTORY LIST1. The Plantation Landscape
Contributing site

The landscape of the Potts Plantation, comprising 510.74 acres of gently rolling terrain and made up largely of Cecil clay loam with sandy loams along the stream sides, encompasses woodlands, fields, and waterways punctuated by thirty-five buildings, sites, and structures. Except for the location of the plantation seat (#3) and four additional houses (#20, #29, #31, and #35) along Smith Road and its linear inter-plantation path, there is no visible or formal principal governing the location of buildings. Instead, here at the Potts Plantation, as at so many historic places, buildings were placed at points which suited historic needs, reflected historic occupation patterns, and were convenient for their purpose. When Robert Potts, Jr., built his house in 1811 he not only placed it on the ninety-six acres which his father gave him that year but he also located it at the edge of what appears to be the highest elevation on the larger plantation. His (long-lost) slave cabins, between the plantation seat and the log barn (#7) were located immediately nearby and to

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 5

the east. There is no little appropriateness to the fact that the once great log barn, now in ruin, appears to stand at the highest point of the plantation; agriculture sustained the life of this place for nearly two centuries. Where patriarch John Potts and his son Robert Potts, Sr. lived is not known at present; however, their residence(s) were probably convenient to springs here.

The location of fields throughout the plantation, likewise, reflects the planter's logic and his knowledge of soils. The site(s) of John Potts and Robert Potts, Sr.'s house(s) is not known at present, and the very early areas cleared and first cultivated by them from 1753 into the early-nineteenth century are not now known. There are some now partially overgrown areas of the plantation whose nineteenth-century cultivation and use remained marked by long disused tenant complexes, and the slave cemetery (#10), and a nearby road; old fields surely became fallow and have grown up in woodlands. It is difficult to say how long the present fields have been in use, certainly they were used during the productive lifetimes of William Robert Potts (1864-1946) and Clifton Eugene Smith (1895-1969) and they remain in cultivation by Charles Eugene Hunter who represents the eighth generation of the Potts family to plant and till these lands. Altogether, cultivated fields occupy one-fifth of the total acreage of the present plantation, and fenced pasture covers approximately thirty-five acres; these are edged in virtually all instances by woodlands of mostly deciduous trees. They are informal in shape and reflect in part the natural and later terraced contours of the terrain. Narrow farm lanes link them to each other and to the functional center of the plantation except for those on the north side of the Rocky River. Fence lines enclosing the former pastures are marked also by rows of towering cedars.

I. Resources of the Settlement Period (1753-1810)

There are no known visible resources dating from this period.

II. Resources of the Plantation Period, 1811-ca. 1875 (and Later)

2. Plantation Seat Domestic Grounds
1811 to the present
Contributing site

The grounds immediately surrounding the 1811 plantation seat contain four extant buildings, the seat (#3), the smokehouse (#4), the dependency (#5), and the poultry house (#6). These buildings are situated in a grass-covered area shaded by volunteer trees, including walnut, cedar, and dogwood, and a wide range of ornamental trees including magnolia, flowering shrubs, evergreen boxwoods, bulbs, and perennials which have been planted by successive generations of the Potts family. There is no apparent formal intent to their

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 6

arrangement. Instead, as was typical of country grounds and house yards, trees, shrubs, and flowers were usually planted by the lady of the house at her discretion and where she anticipated they would grow to please the eye and the senses. While the smokehouse is contemporary with the house, the dependency dates from the later nineteenth century and the poultry house was likely built in the 1920s or 1930s.

The grounds, including the area within a 300-foot radius of the house, were surely the site of earlier now lost domestic outbuildings including the original kitchen, well house, and perhaps storage buildings such as a wood house, tool shed, car shed, etc. The grounds were also the site of the slave quarters which stood on the north side of Smith Road immediately east of the presently maintained front lawn. This co-habitation of close place by master and slave during the antebellum period came to an end in the decade after the war when the former slaves, now freed men and women, enjoyed a different status and relationship with the plantation owner. The slave quarters were probably abandoned for living purposes in the 1870s or early 1880s and gradually deteriorated to the point of collapse and oblivion. As far as can now be determined, any likely domestic outbuildings were probably located on the north side of the public road, running on an east/west axis in front (south) of the house, that became state-maintained Smith Road, and is now a private lane.

3. Plantation Seat
1811; remodeled and renovated 1947
Contributing building

The plantation seat, occupied by members of the Potts family from January 1812 until summer 1975, is composed of a two-story weatherboarded log house on a low brick foundation with flanking one-story wings added in 1947. The core of the dwelling, the two-story-with-attic central block with its shed porch, flanking gable-end brick chimneys, and rear shed, was built in 1811 for Robert Potts, Jr. The house was one of the few Mecklenburg County houses photographed by Frances Benjamin Johnston, the well-known American architectural photographer, in the late 1930s. In 1947 the house was renovated by Robert Potts, Jr.'s, great-grandson, Clifton Eugene Smith, who added the flanking one-story wings to the house, resheathed it and the wings with uniform, wide weatherboards, replaced the original, deteriorated six-over-six window sash with duplicates, and enframed them with simple plain-board surrounds with perimeter bands. Otherwise, he left intact the original Federal porch finish exterior and interior finish. The one-story kitchen forming the rear ell was added in the mid-nineteenth century to replace the earlier freestanding kitchen.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 7 Page 7

While the complete replacement of the weatherboards in 1947 somewhat changed the appearance of the house, an examination of the house's exterior sheathing in the 1930s Frances Benjamin Johnston photograph indicates at least three different types and periods of weatherboarding on the house then. Her photograph is an oblique view showing the east gable end and the front elevation; none of the weatherboarding was painted. The weatherboarding on the front elevation, above the porch's shed roof is wide, apparently original and, in appearance, not unlike the weatherboarding Mr. Smith added in 1947. Most of the weatherboarding on the east gable end is relatively narrow, or conventional in width, and appears to date to the turn-of-the-century replacement of the brick chimney here. The sheathing across the shed end of the porch, from its front edge north to the chimney, appears to be wide German siding from the first decades of this century.

The Exterior

The south facade of the 1811 center block of the house has a symmetrical design comprised of the two-story, three-bay center block and its flanking 1947 wings which hold one window opening each. The first-story elevation of the house is protected by an engaged shed-roof porch supported by stuccoed square brick piers on a wood floor; the piers are connected by a simple square-member railing. These unusual stucco-covered brick piers appear in the Frances Benjamin Johnston photograph and appear to be original to the 1811 construction of the house. The elevation behind the porch is flush-sheathed and framed by corner boards. The center entrance and its flanking bays are set in molded Federal two-part surrounds; the side pieces of the window surrounds continue to the baseboard at the base of the elevation thereby creating a flat panel below each window. The window openings contain six-over-six sash and are fitted with their original raised panel blinds; the doorway retains its original six-panel Federal door and iron box lock. Above the porch roof, the second-story elevation has a like three-bay division of symmetrically-placed openings holding six-over-six sash; these windows are flanked by replacement louvered blinds. The single six-over-six sash windows in each of the wings are also flanked by louvered blinds.

The east and west gable ends of the main block are identical in their appearance. Each retains a single opening, holding six-over-six sash, on the south side of the chimney at both the first and second-story levels. The lower half of the brick chimneys are covered by the wings; the upper half and the stacks are painted white. (The original window openings on the north side of the chimneys are covered by the wings at each level.) At the attic level, paired four-pane windows flank the chimney stack on each gable end. The eaves on the east and west gable ends are flush and simply molded while the eaves across the front and rear elevations are deeper and feature cornice moldings.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 7 Page 8

The nineteenth-century one-story rear ell is asymmetrically placed behind the east half of the main block's north elevation. It is covered by a gable-end roof. A common bond brick chimney, also painted white, stands off-center to the east and is flanked by small four-over-four sash windows which illuminate the kitchen. These windows and a second window illuminating the pantry near the west edge of the north gable end have wide plain-board surrounds with a projecting perimeter fillet. The service porch carrying along the east side of the ell was enclosed with wide German siding, probably in 1947-1948, and has a quartet of six-over-six sash windows on its east elevation. A door flanked by window openings occupies its north shed end. On the west side of the ell a partially glazed door (six panes above three panels) and its flanking six-over-six sash windows occupy the south half of the elevation; the door opens into the breakfast room positioned south of the pantry. Nearby, in the north elevation of the house's rear shed, are paired windows which illuminate the dining room. Two symmetrically placed windows occur on the second story of the main block; they hold six-over-six sash.

The Colonial Revival-style east and west wings are positioned eight and one-half feet behind the main (south) elevation of the house, recessed immediately behind (north) the windows on the south side of the gable end chimneys. These 1947 wings are covered with side-gable roofs whose profiles repeat the angle of the house's main roof. The east wing, containing the master bedroom with adjoining dressing room and bathroom, has paired six-over-six sash windows positioned slightly south of center in its east gable end. There is a single window on the wing's north side which illuminates the dressing room in its northeast corner. The west wing contains a two-car garage and the opening in the west gable end is fitted with paired, blind, top-mounted garage doors with vertical sheathing. Its north elevation is blind.

The Interior

The interior of the house, built on a hall-and-parlor plan, retains its remarkably intact and handsome Federal finish. The house, left as it was when Mrs. Smith died in 1975, is furnished with a wealth of Catawba River Valley furniture, some of which is original to the house, while other pieces have been added. The later Victorian and Colonial Revival furniture has similar pedigrees. The six-panel front door opens directly into the hall, the largest room in the house; there is a similar door on axis in the north wall of the hall which opens into the dining room. The hall and parlor floors are overlaid with pine flooring, said to have been added in 1886. The walls and ceiling of both rooms are flush-sheathed and finished with a molded cornice. The doors and windows retain their original molded Federal surrounds and a molded chair rail encircles the room. Although mantel pieces in Federal-style houses are often impressive and the mantel here is, the dominant features of the hall are the stair which rises in two flights in its northwest corner and a program of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 9

decorative painting, renewed in 1947, which is said to replicate the original scheme. The wainscot and doors are painted with panels of blue outlined in black on a cream field. The stair rises to the west against the north wall to an intermediate landing in the northwest corner of the room; there a door opens onto its enclosed rise, southward along the room's west wall, to the second story. The first stage of the stair is open to the hall and fitted with a railing; its diagonal rise is reflected in a series of three shadow panels on the north wall.

A four-panel door opens into the closet under the stair. The mantel, in the center of the west wall, features molded pilasters which rise from a marble hearth to support a heavily molded projecting shelf. It is flanked by windows; however, the north window, enclosed in the garage wing is fitted with closed louvered blinds to conceal that fact. The partition wall on the west is fitted with symmetrically positioned six-panel doors which open into the parlor/sitting room.

The parlor is likewise sheathed with wide flush boards on its walls and ceiling. It, too, retains its original molded baseboard and molded door and window surrounds; the molded cornice is the same as appears in the hall. The fireplace is also finished with a replacement marble hearth and the fire-box is infilled with brick and fitted with a flue for a small stove. The original mantel is Georgian in character with a heavily molded perimeter frame whose lintel serves as the base of its shelf. The six-panel door opening in the north wall into the dining room and its surround are original. In the 1947 renovation, the window on the north side of the fireplace was converted to a doorway and fitted with a plain board with back band surround to distinguish it from the original fabric. The board-and-batten door opens into the master bedroom.

The master bedroom is finished in a manner sympathetic to the original block yet is clearly later in style and materials. The floors are of narrow pine boards, the walls are wallpapered or painted wallboard, and the ceilings are painted wallboard. The doors and windows of the bedroom, the dressing room, and the bathroom, have plain board surrounds with applied backbands. The brickwork of the east chimney was left exposed and painted. In the north wall a door opens into the dressing room in the wing's northeast corner, and a second door opens into a bathroom, fitted with white fixtures. In plan the dressing room and bathroom are on axis with the rear shed, and a board-and-batten door opens from the bathroom into the east end of the dining room which occupies all of the rear shed. In theory this might not appear desirable; however, the east end of the dining room is furnished as a passage, linking the parlor with the kitchen, while the dining table is placed at the west end of a long narrow room near the paired windows. The other, practical consideration is that this is the only bathroom in the house and the door,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 10

here, makes it available to the upstairs bedrooms. The walls and ceiling of the dining room are flush sheathed with wide boards. Vertical battens on the walls and ceiling indicate that this space originally consisted of two small shed rooms flanking a center passage; however, it is unclear when these partitions were removed and the entire shed came to be used as a dining room.

The Colonial Revival finish of the kitchen ell largely dates to the renovation of 1947. The kitchen has a tile floor of marbelized grey/black tiles. Its walls are painted wallboard except the north wall which is finished with flush vertical pine boards rising from a tall baseboard. Here a bracketed shelf carries across the fireplace's brick firebox. The plywood cabinets, typical of the period, are stained to match the pine paneling. A six-pane over three-panel door opens from the kitchen onto the enclosed porch on the east which is painted white. A like door in the kitchen's west wall opens into the pine-paneled breakfast room. The survival of a window in its south end--originally the exterior wall of the shed--suggests that the breakfast room was originally a porch that became enclosed. A board-and-batten door in the room's north wall opens into an open shelf pantry.

The second story of the plantation seat has a three-room plan; however, only the two largest, front rooms are finished. The enclosed stair rises directly into the west bedchamber. The original flooring here is made up of very wide pine boards of close but varying widths. The west wall has flush horizontal sheathing while the other three walls have flush vertical sheathing: all have molded baseboards and chair rails. The ceiling is flush sheathed. The windows here retain their molded surrounds with backbands. The fireplace has a brick hearth and firebox and wide simple enframement with a molded perimeter band. The firebox has been infilled with brick and fitted with a flue opening for a small wood burning stove. Board-and-batten doors open into the east bedroom and the small unfinished closet on the north side of the west bedroom. The east bedroom likewise retains its original floors, flush sheathed walls and ceiling, and molded baseboard, chair rail, and door and window surrounds.

The appearance and unfinished state of the closet in the northwest corner of the second story suggest the likelihood that changes were made in the finish of the house as it was being completed. The pine flooring here is continuous with the west bedchamber, carrying under the single-board vertical partition. That fact and the survival of some railing suggests that, perhaps, the main staircase was to have been open and to have risen freely up to the second story room where the stairwell was protected by a railing. Whatever the circumstances, the decision was made early and the stairwell has long been enclosed by boxing. Another interesting feature of this small closet is the exposed, whitewashed, chinked log construction of the house which has been left uncovered since 1811. A simple steep flight of steps rises to the attic

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 11

which is partially floored with narrow pine boards probably dating to 1947. In some places boards have simply been laid across the floor joists. The attic is filled with accumulations of generations. Also stored here are the pegged six-pane sash which were taken down and replaced in the 1947 renovation.

4. Smokehouse
Ca. 1811-1820
Contributing building

The smokehouse, northeast of the plantation seat, is a somewhat deteriorated rectangular log building, fitted with dovetail notches. The side-gable roof, with shaped-end pole rafters, is covered with sheet metal; its north and south gable ends are weatherboarded. A wide board-and-batten door is set in its west elevation. The interior has a dirt floor. Joists are inset in the log walls, above head height, to create a loft level.

5. Dependency
Nineteenth century; renovated 1947
Contributing building

Probably dating from the second half of the nineteenth century, this small frame building, northwest of the house, was renovated by Mr. Smith in 1947 and covered with the same wide weatherboards used to resheath the house. It has a side-gable roof covered with sheet metal. A board-and-batten door is set in the center of the south, front elevation; its plain board surround is enclosed with a projecting perimeter fillet. A common-bond ochre-pink brick chimney in the center of the west elevation is flanked by four-over-four sash windows in like surrounds. The east gable end of the building has a single four-by-four sash window, placed off center on the main level and paired board-and-batten doors at the loft level. An enclosed engaged shed occupies the building's rear elevation; it has board-and-batten door on the east shed end and a four-by-four pane window on the north side. The interior of the dependency has a pine floor and unsheathed walls. The loft floor, visible through the floor joists, is laid with very wide pine boards.

6. Poultry House
Ca. 1920-1940
Contributing building

The poultry house in the north yard of the plantation seat is a rectangular frame building sheathed with narrow German siding and covered with a sheet-metal shed roof. A board-and-batten door is positioned at the south edge of the west elevation. A long rectangular opening on the south, front elevation is fitted with glazing and woven screen wire. The interior is

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 12

divided into two spaces by a low board and woven wire partition. The smaller area, immediately inside the door, was used as a feed room. The larger space, for the chickens, retains roost poles along the north wall and some wood nests.

7. Log Barn Work Area
Ca. 1811 to the present
Contributing site

The origins of this area as the principal agricultural work place can be traced to the construction of a large double-pen log barn by Robert Potts, Jr., in the second decade of the nineteenth century. It was covered with a wood shingle side-gable roof that was later covered with sheet metal. This barn was the principal agricultural outbuilding used by the descendant generations of the Potts family from the plantation period, through the tenancy period and the gentleman farmer period, and into the 1970s on a reduced basis. The barn was maintained until it was heavily damaged in the storms associated with Hurricane Hugo which swept through the Piedmont in September 1989. The force of the storm blew the log structure sideways and the roof collapsed atop the partially collapsed log walls and the equipment and materials stored inside. The collapsed building has been left as was, and, even now, one can walk inside and comprehend the plan of the building. The barn was located on the south side of Smith Road, and to the southeast of the plantation seat and the slave quarters. A fenced pasture adjoins the barn site on the west. Nearby, to the northwest, is the ca. 1900-1920 crib. The open area to the north and east of the barn has long been used for outdoor work, and in the late 1980s Charles Eugene Hunter erected a large equipment shed in this area which he continues to use to the present as an agricultural staging area to park tractors, trucks, disengage plows and other equipment, and for general farm use.

8. Crib
Ca. 1900-1920
Contributing structure

Standing on the south side of Smith Road near the plantation's great log barn, the crib is a rectangular frame building consisting of paired ventilated slat pens flanking a center passage. The passage is on a north/south axis. The north gable elevation is weatherboarded; the south elevation has a pent roof carrying across its face, below the sheathed gable end, which protects access to the cribs, with board-and-batten doors on their south ends. The front-gable roof is covered with sheet metal. The crib is flanked by frame storage sheds on its east and west sides which have full-width openings on the south; these traditional additions to the building date to the mid-twentieth century and are covered with sheet metal roofs.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 13

9. Equipment Shed
Ca. 1988
Noncontributing building

Erected by Charles Eugene Hunter east of the log barn, the equipment shed is a tall simple frame multi-bay storage building covered with a sheet metal shed room. The north, front is open as is the east side elevation; the west and rear, south sides are sheathed with sheet metal. It has a dirt floor and is used to shelter large modern farm machinery and hay.

10. Slave Cemetery
Nineteenth century
Contributing site

Located in a hardwood woodland in the east central part of the plantation, this cemetery is visible by its covering of periwinkle which has spread beyond the bounds of the burying ground to cover a sizable area. Some twelve depressions, generally on an east/west axis, are visible and of these at least five are marked by fieldstones set in the earth. Three of the group are located side by side suggesting the graves of a family. The cemetery is located at the edge of a long abandoned road.

III. Resources of the Tenancy and Dispersed Agriculture Period, ca.
1875-1961

11. Tenant Complex #1
Ca. 1875/1885-1961
Contributing site

Situated to the south of the log barn and its work area, this complex includes an abandoned one-story frame house, a deteriorated frame chicken house, and a one-story-with-loft frame granary. Apparently a lane leading off the south side of Smith Road led to the house; however, its path is now lost; the complex stands in a small clearing at the near edge of the woodland carrying along the south side of the pasture adjoining the log barn.

Appearing by its construction to date to the last decades of the nineteenth century, this small one-story frame dwelling is sheathed with (replacement?) narrow German siding and a sheet metal side-gable roof. The two-room main block is expanded by a kitchen ell on the west and a partially enclosed porch on the east front elevation. A salmon-colored brick chimney stands on the north gable end with a small shed to its west. Some six-over-six window sash survives within plain board surrounds. Long occupied by African American tenants, this house was last home to Dan Payne, an old family retainer, in 1960-1961; it has deteriorated through disuse in recent decades.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation

Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 14

Standing to the southwest of the house, the chicken house is typical of the many small shed-roof chicken houses erected in the Piedmont in the early twentieth century. The rectangular frame building is sheathed with weatherboards and a sheet-metal roof. A board-and-batten door is positioned at the west edge of its south, front elevation beside a broad horizontal opening once protected by woven screen wire. This building has deteriorated through disuse since the late 1950s or early 1960s.

12. Granary
Ca. 1900-1925
Contributing building

This two-level gable-front frame building, covered with a sheet metal roof and sheathed with flush horizontal boards, remained in farm use until recent years. It has board-and-batten doors protecting entrances on both levels of the east front elevation. It has an enclosed shed on its north elevation and an open cedar-pole shed on its south elevation.

13. Tenant Complex #2
Ca. 1890-1910--early 1970s
Contributing site

Located on the south edge of the south lane leading off the east end of Smith Road, this complex is marked by a ruined, abandoned one-story frame house and a nearby shed. These buildings stand to the southwest of the Smith Cottage (#20). The house was last occupied in the 1970s by Whitfield Davis as a rental dwelling rather than on a tenant basis. The small rectangular tenant house stands on brick piers and is mostly sheathed in narrow German siding; its four-room plan appears to represent the later addition of a two-room shed to an original two (or three) room house. Its side gable roof is covered with sheet metal. The house retains four-over-four sash, its interior tongue and groove ceiling, and five-panel turn-of-the-century doors.

14. Shed
Ca. 1930-1940
Contributing building

This small rectangular gable-front building with a dirt floor appears to have been built for domestic storage. Its frame structure is sheathed with sheet metal; the roof is also covered with sheet metal. A board-and-batten door is positioned in its west front below the weatherboarded gable end.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 15

15. Tenant Complex #3
Ca. 1890-1910-1961
Contributing site

Situated to the east/southeast of the Smith Cottage on a farm lane, a small four-room frame dwelling is all that survives of this tenant complex. The house, now much overgrown, was last occupied in the 1960s and it has deteriorated through disuse. The finish of the house reflects additions and alterations that were made for the convenience of successive tenant families (and later occupants). Some original board-and-batten sheathing is visible; however, most of the house was covered with asbestos shingles in the 1940s or 1950s. The roof is covered with sheet metal. The interior finish includes original tongue-and-groove ceiling, painted sheet rock, and wallboard. A simple bracketed shelf mantel survives over the fireplace in the north gable-end chimney. The house contains board-and-batten, four-panel, two-panel, and five, horizontal panel doors of varying dates.

16. Tenant Complex #4
Ca. 1880-1910--1961
Contributing site

Located east of tenant complex #3, this site is marked only by a surviving, deteriorated one-story with loft weatherboarded frame house which stands on stone piers and is covered with a sheet metal side-gable roof. A later enclosed shed room and porch occupy the west front elevation, a brick chimney stands on the north gable end, and a one-room kitchen ell is positioned on the east rear elevation of the two-room main block. The interior is sheathed with tongue-and-groove ceiling; however, the partition forming the two rooms in the main block is board and batten. The doors are five-panel turn-of-the-century style. The firebox is surmounted by a simple shelf. This house has stood vacant for the past three-four decades and is now used for lumber storage.

17. Tenant Complex #5
Ca. 1900-1925--1970s
Contributing site

The remains of the substantial collapsed frame barn and a granary at this site, located at the south end of Pine Road and the most remote of the five tenant complexes on the Potts Plantation, indicate that it was the most architecturally developed of the quintet. The house which stood until recent years was ordered destroyed as a nuisance because of vandalism, etc., by Davidson College students. The tenant house stood south of the barn ruins. The barn was a weatherboarded frame building with a front-gable sheet metal roof.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 16

18. Granary
Ca. 1900-1925
Contributing building

This small rectangular frame building with a gable-front roof incorporates a single-pen corn crib.

19. Smith Cottage Complex
Ca. 1891-1961
Contributing site

Between 1811 and the construction of the L. Rodney and M. S. Whisnant House (#29) in 1957, only one other family residence was erected on the Potts Plantation. This occurred about 1891, the year in which Lily Rebecca Potts (1867-1898), the granddaughter of Robert Potts, Jr., was married to Jacob Lafayette Smith (1864-1913). The young couple built the Smith Cottage (#20) and established a household here at the end of Smith Road; they lived here until Mrs. Smith's death in 1898. Mr. Smith lived here for a period of time afterward until he removed to a newly-built house in west Cornelius. It is unclear how the house was used for some dozen years, until 1922, when it became the residence of the Smiths's son, Clifton Eugene Smith, and his bride. The young Mr. Smith erected a garage (#21) and the poultry house/shed (#22) about the time he came here to live. He also renovated the house. This site comprises the Smith Cottage (#20), the garage, and the poultry house/shed. The younger Mr. Smith also developed a farm complex (#23) to the north of this house around the frame barn (#24) which his father had built. The grounds of the house are shaded by towering white oaks and other deciduous trees into which wisteria has escaped. Most of these appear to be volunteers, while some few flowering shrubs and ivy were planted. Clifton Eugene Smith and his wife occupied the cottage and these grounds until 1947 when they moved into the renovated family seat. In 1948 the house became the home of Smith's younger daughter Lilyan (b. 1925) and her husband, Charles Celester Hunter (1913-1961) who were married that year. After Mr. Hunter's death, Mrs. Hunter and her son moved into the second story of the plantation seat and remained there until moving into their new Colonial Revival-Style house (#31). After that, the cottage was rented for about ten years, and it has stood vacant for the past quarter century or so.

20. Smith Cottage
Ca. 1891
Contributing building

The Smith Cottage is a substantial one-story T-plan frame house on a brick basement; it is sheathed with novelty siding and covered with a sheet-tin

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 17

side-gable roof. The house was finished with an Italianate-style door and a turned-post porch: in 1922 Clifton Eugene Smith relocated the original front door to the rear and replaced it with a fifteen-pane French door. He also replaced the turned posts on the porch with bungalow-style piers. Otherwise, most of the house's original finish, including molded door and window surrounds, five-panel turn-of-the-century doors, and other detailing was left intact. Although the Smith cottage suffered damage during Hurricane Hugo in 1989, it remains essentially sound under a largely intact roof.

21. Garage
Ca. 1922
Contributing building

Probably erected by Clifton Eugene Smith upon his occupation of the Smith cottage (#20), the garage is a simple one-stall frame building sheathed in weatherboards and covered by a sheet metal front-gable roof. It has an opening on the west gable end. It stands south of the cottage.

22. Poultry House/Shed
Ca. 1922 with later shed addition
Contributing structure

Located northeast of the cottage, the original part of this rectangular building was probably built as a frame shed-roof poultry house by Clifton Eugene Smith about 1922 when he and his wife came to live in the Smith cottage (#20). It was later expanded by a cedar pole shed with a sheet-metal roof. It was used to store farm equipment until recent years.

23. Smith Cottage Barn Work Area
Ca. 1895
Contributing site

This agricultural work area to the north of the Smith Cottage is anchored by the large frame barn which was built here by Jacob Lafayette Smith about 1895. Comprising the barn (#24), a corn crib (#25), a granary (#26), a chicken house (#27), and the ruinous gear house, this site is the second major family-operated agricultural work area on the plantation. It was the scene of agricultural operations carried on by Jacob Lafayette Smith, his son Clifton Eugene Smith, and his grandson-in-law Charles Celester Hunter from about 1895 until the death of Mr. Hunter in 1961. These buildings were also used as ancillary farm outbuildings by Clifton Eugene Smith until his death in 1969. The barn, the granary, and the crib have been used infrequently in recent years because of changes in agricultural production and the scale of cash crop farming now carried on here. The yard is bisected by the path of the north farm lane which splits off the end of Smith Road and continues on to pastures

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 18

and woodlands. A former pasture adjoins the barn on its east side and there are remnants of barbed wire fencing from now abandoned enclosures in the volunteer growth around the complex. The gear house, standing off the southwest corner of the barn, is a small deteriorated rectangular weatherboarded frame building erected to store harness and other gear used when mules worked the fields of the plantation. It has a door on its north gable front, a window opening on the south, and a frame shed on the west side. A gable front roof covers the building.

24. Barn
Ca. 1895
Contributing building

This large center-passage frame barn, covered with weatherboards and a front gable roof, is believed to have been erected by Jacob Lafayette Smith. Erected on an east/west axis, it has stables flanking the center passage with a large loft above for hay and straw storage. The frame shed along its south elevation appears to be original (or nearly so) while the shed across the building's east elevation is a later addition. The barn's original wood shingle roof, later overlaid with sheet metal, is visible in the loft.

25. Corn Crib
Ca. 1922
Contributing structure

Probably dating from Clifton Eugene Smith's occupation of the Smith Cottage, but perhaps dating earlier, to the turn of the century and his father's residence here, the crib is a traditional double-pen corn crib built on a center-passage plan. The frame building, on a north/south axis and southwest of the barn, has a front-gable roof of sheet metal and weatherboarded gable ends. A frame shed has been erected on its east side for storage.

26. Granary
Ca. 1922-1930
Contributing building

This rectangular building, standing west of the corn crib and probably dating to the early years of Clifton Eugene Smith's occupation of the nearby cottage, is a center-passage building erected on an east/west axis. Bins and compartments opening off the passage are fitted with board-and-batten doors. The granary is sheathed with flush horizontal boards overlaid with tar paper. It has a frame shed on the north side with a full-width opening on its east end. The building is now used for hay and lumber storage.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 19

27. Chicken House
Ca. 1930-1940
Contributing structure

Standing west of the barn, this simple rectangular frame building is sheathed in flush horizontal boards and is covered with a sheet metal shed roof. It has a door in its south, front elevation and a broad opening across the top of the elevation that was earlier covered with woven wire.

28. Potts Cemetery
1946
Contributing site

This small grass-covered family plot, positioned at the extreme west edge of the family holding where it abuts the Mount Zion United Methodist Church cemetery, was established in 1946 when Katherine Wilson Potts was buried here after her death on 29 March. Nine months later, on 9 December, her husband William Robert Potts died and was buried beside her. Their grave is marked by a conventional granite headstone with individual footstones for each of them. Following Charles Celester Hunter's death on 20 February 1961 he was buried here; his grave is marked by a white marble stone. A third gravestone was erected to mark the graves of Clifton Eugene Smith who died on 10 August 1969 and his wife Mary Reid Smith, the last occupant of the plantation seat (#3), who died on 9 June 1975.

29. L. Rodney and Miriam Smith Whisnant House
1957
Noncontributing building

Jack McGee, a Gilead-area contractor, erected this one-story brick-veneer house in 1957 for Miriam Smith and her husband L. Rodney Whisnant. The substantial traditionally styled house has a six-bay front elevation which faces south to Smith Road. The asymmetrical facade has a recessed doorway, preceded by a brick stoop, with two windows illuminating bedrooms to the east and three larger windows illuminating the living and dining rooms to the west. A chimney rises through the side-gable asphalt shingle roof. The rectangular house has a small gable roof ell which contains a screened porch and a shelter for one car. The Whisnants continue to occupy the house.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 20

30. Storage Building
Ca. 1987
Noncontributing building

This small prefabricated storage building sheathed with manufactured exterior sheet paneling and an asphalt shingle gambrel roof was purchased about 1987 and placed here for storage. It has a double-door opening on the south gambrel end. It is traditional in appearance and inobtrusive.

IV. and V. Resources of the Gentleman Farming Period (1961-1980) and Cash Crop Farming Period (1980-)

31. Lilyan Smith Hunter House
1964-1965
Noncontributing building

This one-story on basement traditionally styled brick veneer ranch house was built by Gilead-area contractor Jack McGee for Lilyan Smith Hunter; she and her son continue to occupy the two-bedroom house. Covered with a side gable asphalt shingle roof, the house faces south to Smith Road and has a five-bay front elevation. The center entrance is flanked by two windows on either side holding six-over-six sash. A chimney, flanked by windows, stands on the west gable end while the east end has two large garage openings in the basement with windows above on the first story. The rear elevation has an asymmetrical arrangement of doors and windows.

32. Log House
Nineteenth century: relocated here in 1968
Noncontributing building

This small weatherboarded log house, known as the Mock house, was moved here from Davidson. Mrs. Hunter was to restore it with her father's assistance; however, his death in 1969 effectively ended that plan and the house has stood vacant to the present. The dovetail-notch house is covered with a sheet-metal side-gable roof. The interior has an open-beam ceiling and a corner stair.

33. Shop
1992
Noncontributing building

Erected in 1992 by Charles Eugene Hunter, this large sheet metal covered frame building, measuring thirty by forty feet, serves as the principal covered work area on the farm. It has a conventional door on the south side and a large garage-type opening on the west gable end covered by sliding doors. The interior has a poured cement floor and a utilitarian appearance.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 21

34. Equipment Shed
Ca. 1981; expanded 1996
Noncontributing building

Built for the storage of farm machinery, this large open creosote pole building is covered by a sheet metal shed roof. The original two-bay building was virtually doubled in size in 1996 to provide additional space for equipment.

35. Richard Norris and Miriam Jane Whisnant Workman House
1993
Noncontributing building

Michael Stewart, a Huntersville contractor, erected this substantial Colonial Revival-Style one-and-a-half-story brick veneer house in 1993 for Miriam Jane Whisnant Workman and her husband. The five-bay center block, with its trio of dormer windows, is flanked by a recessed two-bay bedroom wing on the west and a pendant double-car garage on the east.

36. Stable
1994
Noncontributing building

The stable is a rectangular frame building sheathed with board and batten siding and a front-gable roof. It was a center opening on its west gable end protected by sliding doors. Traditional in appearance it is inobtrusive in the landscape. Its adjoining pasture stretches eastward to the log barn along the south edge of the plantation's westernmost fields.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 22

Summary

The Potts Plantation, the property of the Potts family since 1753 and the largest rural agricultural tract (510.74 acres) in Mecklenburg County that has remained in continuous ownership, occupation, and cultivation by a single family since the Colonial period, is a cultural landscape of extraordinary significance in the history of Piedmont North Carolina. The acreage included in this nomination is the residual portion of 636 acres acquired on 3 September 1753 by John Potts from John Brevard. Brevard had received the property, then in Anson County, by grant on 11 April 1752, but he probably never lived on the tract. Whether John Potts came to North Carolina from Maryland or Pennsylvania, where two towns bear his family's name, is uncertain. A full understanding of his life and occupation of this tract also remains elusive; however, in 1770 he conveyed the 636-acre plantation to his son Robert Potts, as a gift, with the reservation that Robert Potts "shall provide all Necessary Accommodations & Conveniences, during the natural life of the said John Potts, that he may personally require." Robert Potts satisfied these familial obligations; John Potts lived another thirteen years, dying sometime after making his will on 1 May 1783. The location of John Potts's house and that of his son Robert Potts (ca. 1745-1821) on these lands is not known.

In 1811 Robert Potts conveyed to his son and namesake Robert Potts, Jr. (1786-1859) the 96-acre tract on which he built the two-story-with-attic weatherboarded Federal-style log house that remains the family seat to the present. That same year, on 22 August, Robert Potts, Jr., was married to Nancy Eveline R. Gillespie. He or Mrs. Potts recorded their marriage in the family Bible and added the notation that they "commenced house keeping January 1812." Although Robert Potts, Jr., was not a wealthy planter on the scale of Robert Davidson or James Galbraith Torrence, he was a prominent member of the local gentry and became a founding member and elder of Bethel Presbyterian Church. He was also instrumental in the founding and opening of Davidson College, named for General William Lee Davidson (17__-1781), the father of William Lee Davidson II, the owner of the neighboring plantation on the east. Early in 1835 Potts and Davidson were named to a committee to secure materials for building the college and later in the year, on 25 August, Robert Potts and Davidson were appointed to the nine-member building committee charged with erecting the first Davidson College buildings. In the fall of 1835, Robert Potts hosted at his plantation a meeting of the Concord Presbytery to discuss college matters and in 1836 he was elected a member of the college's Board of Trustees. Like others of his generation Robert Potts, Jr., owned slaves who were housed in long-lost cabins, to the east of his seat and on the north side of Smith Road; however, their presence is recalled in the survival of the periwinkle-covered slave cemetery where graves remain marked by inset fieldstones and depressions.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 23

Robert Potts, Jr., lived in his Federal-style plantation seat until death in 1859 and burial at Bethel Church. The house and core lands were then owned and occupied by his youngest surviving son Thomas Espy Potts (1829-1897). It was during his lifetime that the operation of the farm passed from one sustained by slave labor, to hired labor, to the tenant system that remained in effect until 1961. The ruins of four tenant houses and numerous outbuildings still stand on the plantation together with the frame Victorian cottage built in 1891 when his daughter, Lily Rebecca (1867-1898), was married to Jacob Lafayette Smith (1864-1913). The Smith Cottage was also home to four generations of the Potts family. At the death of Thomas Espy Potts in 1897, the plantation seat and its acreage passed to William Robert Potts, his youngest son, who lived in the house from his birth in 1864 until his death in 1946.

While there were divisions of the family lands through the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the fact that a number of family members either never married, or married and produced no offspring, has meant the essential maintenance, through inheritance or inter-family purchase, of the core holding. During the lifetime of Clifton Eugene Smith (1895-1969), the principal heir of his uncle Will Potts and his bachelor brother, the acreage of the Potts Plantation was consolidated in his ownership. Upon inheriting the family seat in 1946 he undertook a renovation of the plantation seat, and moved there in 1947 with his wife. The period of significance ends in 1947 with his Colonial Revival-style renovation of the family seat. He lived in the house until his death as did his wife, Mary Emma Reid, who died in 1975. Three later houses on the western edge of the plantation, erected between 1957 and 1993, are occupied by members of the family.

The Potts Plantation, with its period of significance spanning the 194-year period from 1753 until 1947, holds statewide significance in the areas of agriculture, architecture, archaeology (historic/non-aboriginal), social history, and European and Black ethnic heritage, and satisfies National Register criteria A, B, C, and D. Continuously owned, occupied, and farmed by members of a single family, their slaves, and their tenants since 1753, the Potts Plantation is the only known such major plantation holding in Mecklenburg County that has remained intact to the present, and it is one of the few in North Carolina that have such an impressive continuous agricultural and social history. Its twenty-seven known contributing buildings, structures, and sites, and other potential historic archaeological sites, record and represent the entire spectrum of agricultural development in the Piedmont. There are no visible remains of the initial settlement period (1753-1810) when the first European settler John Potts and his son established self-sustaining farms; however, surviving buildings, sites, and structures, represent the slave-based economy of the plantation period (1811-ca. 1875),

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 24

the tenancy and dispersed agriculture period (ca. 1875-1961), the gentleman farming period (1961-1980), and the current cash crop farming operations of Charles Eugene Hunter, the eighth generation of the Potts family to cultivate these lands on the Rocky River.

While various members of the family have achieved prominence in the community and the region, the plantation is most associated with the life of Robert Potts, Jr. (1786-1859), who built the Federal-style house which remained a family residence until 1975, and who served on important committees for the establishment and operation of Davidson College in the 1830s including its Board of Trustees. His house survives as an important example of Federal/Colonial Revival architecture in Mecklenburg County and the Piedmont; the houses, outbuildings, and sites which survive on the Potts Plantation, dating between 1811 and 1947, reflect the traditional building practices and materials of a single family and an agrarian-based society in the Piedmont.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 25Historical Background and Social History ContextJohn Potts Acquires and Occupies this Plantation on the Rocky River

John Potts (17__-1783), the progenitor of the Potts family of upper Mecklenburg County and the first of that name to own this property, was a member of the large Scotch-Irish Presbyterian community which settled in the northwest Carolina frontier in the mid-eighteenth century; he purchased 636 acres, including most of this property, from John Brevard in 1753. These settlements, principally along the waters of the region's major rivers, including the Catawba and Yadkin, and its creeks, are discussed in CAROLINA CRADLE; this pioneering work by Robert W. Ramsey looks at settlement during the period from 1747 to 1762. When and where John Potts was born is not known at present. Ramsey identifies men by the names of John and James Potts as landowners in the Fourth Creek Settlement, in present-day Rowan County, as coming from Queen Annes, Kent, or Dorchester Counties, Maryland (Ramsey, 96). However, members of the Potts family were also residents of Chester County, Pennsylvania and gave their names to the towns of Pottstown and Pottsville located northwest of Philadelphia. John Potts and James Potts (17__-1781) were brothers and both lived in Mecklenburg County; neither man apparently ever lived on his Fourth Creek grant from Earl Granville.¹

John Brevard (1716-1790), the first private owner of this property, was also a member of this early group of settlers. However, he was of Huguenot ancestry and came to North Carolina in the 1740s from Maryland; his father, John Brevard, had emigrated from Ireland to the Maryland colony in the early eighteenth century (Ramsey, 48). The younger John Brevard began acquiring land on the waters of the Rocky River in the later 1740s. On 11 April 1752 Gabriel Johnston conveyed to John Brevard a grant of 636 acres in Anson County; the tract adjoined the property of Robert Brevard (Secretary of State Records, Land Grant Book 2, page 10). John Brevard held this property for one year and five months, until selling it to John Potts of Anson County through lease and release deeds of 3 and 4 September 1753 for five shillings and forty pounds, respectively (Anson County Deeds C-1: 223-229).

According to family tradition, John Potts and his wife occupied this (Anson, now Mecklenburg County) tract and raised a family which included four surviving children: Robert; James; William; and Margaret Potts. The mother of these children is believed to be his (first) wife Geals _____. On 18 April 1764 John and Geals Potts conveyed the 580-acre Rowan County holding, acquired in 1761, to their son William Potts (Rowan County Deed Book 6, 74-76). John Potts was apparently a widower by 16 January 1770 when he conveyed the 636-acre home tract the core of which is the residual 510-acre plantation (and the nominated acreage) to "my loving son Robert Potts, of Mecklenburg County" with the provision "that the said Robert Potts shall provide all Necessary

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 26

Accommodations & Conveniences, during the natural life of the said John Potts, that he may personally request" (Mecklenburg County Deed Book 7, 255). (Mecklenburg County was formed out of Anson County in 1762.) The precise location of the eighteenth-century family residence on this acreage is not known; however, it continued to be the home of John Potts until at least 1783.

On 1 May 1783 John Potts made his will wherein he devised sums of money to three of his children and the remainder of his estate to his son and executor Robert Potts. James Potts (ca. 1740-after 1810) was bequeathed five pounds; William Potts (ca. 1743-after 1810) was bequeathed thirty pounds; and Margaret Potts Thompson was devised twenty shillings (MCW F: 10). According to family tradition the patriarch is buried in an unmarked grave at Coddle Creek APR Church, in lower Iredell County, where his son Robert and his wife would later be buried.

Robert Potts, Sr., and the Plantation

Robert Potts (ca. 1745-1821), the youngest surviving son of John Potts, probably continued to live in the house in which he had provided accommodation to his father. In the early 1770s he was married to Elizabeth McKeown (ca. 1752-1834), the daughter of John McKeown and a sister of Margaret McKeown who had married her husband's older brother William. Robert and Elizabeth Potts had at least eight children who lived to adulthood: James Potts (1775-1827) who lived in Mecklenburg County and is buried at Providence Presbyterian Church; Jonathan Potts (177?-by 1835) who moved to Bibb County, Alabama in the early 1820s and later to Lowndes County, Mississippi, where he died; John Potts (ca. 1781-1826) who removed to Bedford County, Tennessee, where he died; Annie Potts (1785-1857) who never married and is buried at Bethel Presbyterian Church; Robert Potts, Jr. (1786-1859) who built the frame Federal period house which remains the family seat (#2); Zelinda Potts (1789-1850) who married Robert Henderson and is buried at Bethel Church, Mecklenburg County; Edwin Potts (1793-1854) who married Elizabeth Hall (1798-1860) but who died without issue and is also buried at Bethel Presbyterian Church; and Eliza (Eloisa) Potts who gave birth to a son Joseph McEwen Potts (ca. 1819-1869) and was later married to Thomas A. MaGahey, but nothing more is known of her. (Joseph McEwen Potts was raised as a ward of his grandfather.)

Through a series of deeds between 1811 and 1816, Robert Potts, Sr., conveyed tracts of his real estate to his sons Robert Potts, Jr., Jonathan, John, and Edwin. On 20 July 1811, in the first of these transactions, he conveyed to his namesake a parcel of ninety-six acres connecting with "Jonathan Potts last corner" and "John Potts line" for the "good will and affection he bairs [sic] to his son Robert Potts, Jun." (MCDB 19, 659). In two deeds dated 16 January 1815, the senior Potts sold tracts of land that were on the waters of the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 27

Rocky River and parts "of a tract of land originally granted to John Brevard" to his sons Jonathan and Robert, Jr. (MCDB 20, 130). Both deeds were recorded on 7 October 1815. The first of the two conveyed 255 acres to Jonathan Potts for \$600; the second deed conveyed 121 acres for \$500 to Robert Potts, Jr. Ten days later, on 26 January, Robert Potts conveyed 103 acres for \$300 to John Potts; the property was described in the deed as "being part of Robert Potts original tract" (MCDB 19, 66). The final deed, conveying 390 acres on the "head waters of rocky river" to Edwin Potts, was made on 20 January 1816 in exchange for \$1,000. It contained a provision that "The said Robert Potts Senior will receive a comfortable provision during his natural life together with his wife Elizabeth Potts during her life, also his (Robert Potts) three daughters, Anne, Linda (Zelinda), and Eliza shall receive their board and comfortable provision during their Single life, or as long as they remain in that State" (MCDB 20, 201).

Only history is privy to the reason Robert Potts, Sr., divided the majority of his real estate among his four sons and sold it to them. Perhaps he was plagued with ill health; however, there is no mention of it (as might be expected) in the deeds. He might also have ceased to farm and felt it best to place the property in the hands of his sons for their use. Whatever the case, Robert Potts lived on for another five-and-one-half years, until his death on 5 September 1821. He was buried at Coddle Creek ARP Church, Iredell County. He had made his will on 15 July 1821 bequeathing to his wife Elizabeth "the plantation I now live on supposed to consist of two hundred & three acres . . . for her to dispose of at her death as she may think proper." He also gave his wife his slave Clara and her child and Sam who was to go to his son John at her death; other bequests to his widow included one-third of the "house & kitchen furniture." He bequeathed ten shillings to each of his four sons. Zelinda Potts was bequeathed a slave girl as was Eloisa; Ann and Eloisa were each to have thirds of the house and kitchen furniture. The remainder of his estate was to be sold, his debts paid, and the residue to be divided equally between his widow and daughters, Ann and Eloisa. He named William Lee Davidson and James Potts, his eldest son, as his executors (MCWF, 96).

Elizabeth McKeown Potts lived for nearly thirteen years after the death of her husband, dying on 22 March 1834 and buried in the cemetery at Coddle Creek Church. In her will, dated 5 January 1833, she made her unmarried daughter Ann(e) her principal beneficiary; however, there were specific bequests to her daughter Zelinda, her granddaughter Elizabeth (Betsy) Henderson, and her grandson Joseph McEwen Potts. Anne Potts received "that part of the tract of land on which I live which is now in cultivation and under fence together with as much wood land to be laid off by two freeholders as will be sufficient in their opinion to keep the same under good fence during her natural life." Robert Potts, Jr., and Anne Potts were the executors. The remainders of the property was to be sold and the proceeds devised to Anne (MCW G: 176).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 28

Robert Potts, Jr., and the Plantation

Meanwhile, Robert Potts, Jr., had been living in the two-story Federal style seat (#3) of his plantation during the final twenty-two years of his mother's life. Given the coincidence of dates in 1811, it is clear that Robert Potts, Sr., gave his son and namesake the tract of ninety-six acres on 11 July anticipating his marriage a month later, on 22 August, to Nancy Eveline Gillespie (1794-1845). According to family tradition the house was built on this tract of land during 1811. Potts wrote in his Bible ". . . was married August 22, 1811 and commenced house keeping January 1812" which has been interpreted to mean the date on which the couple moved into the house.

The two-story house, with two principal rooms on each level, was home to the builder, his wife, and at least ten children born between 1812 and 1833: James Alexander Gillespie Potts (1812-1888) who was probably named for his maternal grandfather; Ephraim McKeown Potts (1814-1835) who probably did not marry and is buried at Bethel Church; Zebulon Newton Jetton Potts (1816-1843), who was married to Mary C. Hall and sired two daughters before his death and burial at Bethel Church; Esther Oliphant Potts (1817-1818) who is buried at Coddle Creek between her paternal grandparents; Charles Stanhope Potts (1819-1865) who married Elizabeth Connelley (1824-1871) in 1846, farmed on a portion of the Potts family land, and who is thought to be buried in an unmarked grave at Bethel Church; Nancy Evelina Potts (1822-1863) who was married to Theophilus A. Gillespie in 1843 and is buried "with her infant son in her arms," according to her gravestone at Bethel Church; Robert Miles Potts (1823-1824); Julius Robinson Potts (1826-ca. 1863) who was married to Christine Connelly in 1847 and farmed in the area; Thomas Espy Potts (1829-1897) who would inherit and occupy his father's house; and William White Potts (1833-1835) who is buried at Bethel Church.

Except for the record of land transactions, wills, and the genealogical material cited in the preceding pages, relatively little is known of the lives of John Potts and his son, Robert Potts, Sr. However, Robert Potts, Jr., appears to have taken a larger role in community affairs and to have prospered as a planter to a larger extent than that of his siblings. In September 1829 he was one of four men elected as the first elders of the newly-organized Bethel Presbyterian Church. Three years later he and his neighbor, William Lee Davidson, II (1781-1862), were among the trustees who acquired property on the north side of the Beatty's Ford Road for the permanent site of a church.

Robert Potts was also instrumental in the establishment of Davidson College and its opening in 1837. His house stands about one-and-one-half miles, as the crow flies, south of the Davidson College campus. William Lee Davidson II, his immediate neighbor to the east, was one of the most forceful advocates

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 29

for a Presbyterian college in the region; he would later sell a tract of land as the site of the college which was named in honor of his father, General William Lee Davidson, who died in 1781 at the Battle of Cowan's Ford which occurred nearby (to the west) at the Catawba River. Robert Potts and his family had been active in the Presbyterian Church, first in the Coddle Creek congregation and later at Bethel Church. With four sons to educate, he could personally appreciate the value of a college in the community and what it could mean to the cultural advancement of the Catawba River Valley. Early in 1835 Robert Potts, together with William Lee Davidson II and the Rev. John Williamson, pastor of Hopewell Presbyterian Church, and two others "were appointed a committee to contract for whatever materials for Building it may be judged expedient to prepare during the present season" (CBC, 101).

Initially Robert Potts was not a member of the twenty-four-member Board of Trustees for Davidson College, elected by the Concord Presbytery on 13 October 1835. However, two weeks later, on 28 October, he was host at his plantation to a called meeting of the Concord Presbytery held to consider questions concerning the suitability of the lands being purchased from William Lee Davidson II as the site for the new college (CBC, 104). The men attending the meeting could easily ride on horseback or in wagons over the few miles to the north to inspect and walk the Davidson lands. In 1836 Potts was elected to the Board of Trustees to replace Abram Alexander who had "removed to the west" (CBC, 107). He is identified as a trustee in the college charter ratified by the North Carolina General Assembly on 28 December 1838. His sons attended the college in its first years of operation. The present owners of the Potts Plantation retain receipts, dated 9 February 1838 and signed by Abel Graham, steward, for Potts's payment of \$30 for the board of Charles Stanhope Potts for the first and second sessions of Davidson College and \$15 for the board of his ward (and grandson) Joseph McKeown Potts for the first session. A receipt dated 4 April 1839 and signed by the Rev. Robert Hall Morrison, the first president of Davidson College, acknowledges payment of \$5.00 for tuition for Zebulon Potts's attendance for half of the fourth session. Robert Potts's youngest son, Thomas Espy Potts, graduated in the class of 1851.

In the 1820s and 1830s, Robert Potts reassembled portions of the Potts lands under his ownership, buying tracts from several of his siblings. On 1 February 1822, he purchased a tract of fifty-two acres, described as "being a part of Robert Potts original tract," for \$312 from his brother John Potts (MCDB 21, 123). On 11 November 1824 he bought off his brother James Potts a tract of 214 acres described as "being on the head branches of Rocky river & a part of the old tract owned by Robert Potts decd. Conveyed by him to Edwin Potts & him to James Potts for & in consideration of the sum of \$800" (MCDB 21, 176). Then, on 1 August 1838 he purchased a tract from his sister Anne Potts for \$443.25. It was described in the deed as "a plot of the old plantation of Robt Potts decd. joining the Land of Alexander Gillespie heirs

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 30

. . . on the head waters of Rocky river Beginning . . . in the forks of the branch & runs . . . to B. O. now a pile of stone thence running near the old dwelling house to the beginning" (MCD B 24, 513). (Dating five months after the death of their mother Elizabeth McKeown Potts, this transfer of land may well be the property which Anne Potts received as a bequest of her mother; however, this cannot be confirmed at present. The "old dwelling house" was probably the family's eighteenth-century residence.)

Although Robert Potts was "not on the list of large planters," as Dr. Chalmers Gaston Davidson (190_-1994) noted in his family-oriented monograph THE PLANTATION WORLD AROUND DAVIDSON, a class that included James Johnston (____-1860) of Walnut Grove, David Alexander Caldwell of Glenwood, Major Rufus Reid (____-1854) of Mount Mourne, James Latta (d. 1837) of Latta Place, Major John Davidson (1735-1832) of Rural Hill, Robert "Robin" Davidson (1769-1853) of Holly Bend, James Galbraith Torrance (1784-1847) of Cedar Grove, Benjamin Wilson Davidson (1787-1829) of Oak Lawn, and William Lee Davidson II of Beaver Dam, he and his family were members of a prosperous gentry who lived well. Except for Cedar Grove which remains the residence of Torrance's descendants, all of these other places have passed out of the families, and the lands greatly reduced or altogether subdivided. Of the group, the Potts family have owned and occupied their plantation for a longer period than any other of this community and, as can best be determined, of any in the county, a period of 244 years extending from 1753 to 1997.

The status of Robert Potts's family is indicated by his involvement in the establishment of Davidson College, the finish of his house, and quality of the family furnishings which remain in it, and the slaves which he owned. The 1830 Census indicates he owned nine slaves, and by 1840 that number had increased to sixteen, mostly by natural increase. In 1850 he owned ten slaves while his sons Charles Stanhope and Julius Robinson Potts owned three each; a comparison of the ages of the sixteen slaves in 1840 with the ten owned by the senior Potts in 1850 suggests that he may have given or sold one or more of them to each of his sons during the decade. This possible effort to help his sons get established is reinforced by the sale of lands to Charles Stanhope Potts in 1847 and 1853; Charles Stanhope Potts was married to Elizabeth Connelly (1824-1871) on 29 October 1846. In the earlier year he sold his son a tract of 160 acres for \$500; the property was described as "on one of the head Branches of Rocky River Joining the lands of Jas. Johnston and others being a part of the old tract belonging to the Grand Father of the Said Stanhope Potts" (MCDB 2, 283). This emphatic description of the land as having been owned by Robert Potts, Sr., indicates the patrimonial appreciation of property which has long been a trait of the family; in this case it was not at all necessary as a legal description but appears as an indication of lineage and strong family ties to place. Later, in February 1853, Robert Potts sold his son an additional twenty-six acres for \$300 which appears to have adjoined the tract conveyed in 1847 (MCDB 6, 177).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 31

The sale of property in 1847 and 1853 and the possible transferral of slaves to his sons might also have been associated, as well, with changes in the family life. Robert Potts's wife, Nancy Eveline Gillespie, died on 6 February 1845 and was buried at Bethel Church. A year later, on 3 February 1846, Robert Potts was married to Kiziah A. Black (1808-1863). There were no children of this union. Robert Potts would live on here until his death on 20 November 1859; he made his will on 20 January 1848. He divided his real and personal property among his wife, his five surviving children, and his granddaughters Elizabeth Ann Hall Potts (b. 1841) and Esther Evaline Jetton Potts (b. 1843), the daughters of his son Zebulon (1816-1843) who had been named for their great-grandmother and grandmother Potts, respectively. The will indicates that he had given both James A. G. and Julius R. Potts deeds for family lands, just as he had already conveyed property to his son Stanhope; however, those deeds were apparently never recorded. The fifteen slaves were apportioned between his wife and five children. Certain kitchen and household furnishings were bequeathed to his wife and youngest son Thomas Espy, then eighteen years of age, and the remainder was to be sold. He also bequeathed to Thomas Espy Potts a tract of unspecified acreage that lies west of a certain line, including the Federal-period homeplace; the remainder is to be sold and the proceeds used to educate Thomas Espy or, if he is already educated, to be divided equally among the legatees (MCW J: 76). Robert Potts, Jr., was buried at Bethel Church.

Thomas Espy Potts--A Fourth Generation Owner of the Plantation

Thomas Espy Potts, the second owner of the Potts house, was born on 10 September 1829; the youngest surviving son of Robert Potts, Jr., he was named for the Rev. Thomas Espy (d. 1833), minister at Centre Presbyterian Church and to the young Bethel congregation. Potts was educated at Davidson College, graduating with the class of 1851. On 3 August 1852 he was married to Rebecca Catherine White (1830-1917), the daughter of Thomas and Elvira (Caldwell) White of the Centre Church community. Thomas Espy Potts served as a private in Company C, First Regiment, North Carolina Calvary. He and his wife were the parents of at least seven children: Mary Catherine Potts (1853-1861) who is buried at Bethel Church; an unnamed infant son (1856); Thomas Pritchard Potts (1857-1937) who was married to Ellen McRaven but produced no issue; Nancy Evaline Potts (1859-1861); James Albert Potts (1862-1890) who was never married; William Robert Potts (1864-1946) who would inherit the Potts family house and principal lands; and Lillie Rebecca Potts (1867-1898) whose descendants are now the owners of the Potts Plantation.

In addition to military service during the Civil War and the privations which accompanied the war, the decade of the 1860s brought other misfortune to

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 32

Thomas Espy Potts and other members of his family. Two years after the death of his father on 20 November 1859, Potts lost his two daughters to pneumonia in October 1861. On 1 July 1863 his stepmother, Kiziah (Black) Potts died, and five months later his last surviving sister, Nancy Evelina (Potts) Gillespie died on 4 November 1863. His brother Julius Robinson Potts is also said to have died in 1863; however, the date is not confirmed. On 19 December 1865, his brother Charles Stanhope Potts died leaving his widow and six surviving children ranging in age from eighteen years of age to the youngest, Houston Beauregard Potts, who had been born on 13 October 1863. Thomas Espy Potts, with paternal feelings no doubt encouraged by the death of his two daughters, assumed some responsibility for the raising of his brother's family.

As often happened within the Potts family over the course of generations, the death of Charles Stanhope Potts resulted in the reconsolidation of family lands. Apparently his children and their mother Elizabeth (Connelly) Potts (1824-1871) remained on their father's portion of the Potts land, and probably they formed a household of their own after Mrs. Potts's death in 1871. In the early 1880s, the three surviving sons of the family--Sidney Connelly Potts (1853-1920), John Robert Potts (1858-1927), and Houston Beauregard Potts (1863-1928)--moved to northwest Georgia where they died in Catoosa County and are buried at Rock Spring Methodist Church, Walker County. On 14 March 1882 John Robert Potts, then living in Mecklenburg County, sold his one-sixth interest in his late father's 200-acre holding to Thomas Espy Potts (MCDB 30, 180) for \$170. This tract adjoined Thomas Espy Potts and others. On 9 October 1884, Sidney C. and Houston B. Potts sold their undivided two-sixths interest in their late father's land to Thomas Espy Potts for \$500 (MCDB 40, 86); they were then residents of Catoosa County, Georgia. Thomas Espy Potts apparently acquired the interests of the three female siblings and reunited the property. According to family tradition this land was in the southwest quadrant of the present Potts family holding; the actual site of the Charles Stanhope Potts house is not known but is believed to lie within the nominated acreage.

Thomas Espy Potts remained the owner and resident of the family seat until his death on 13 April 1897, when he was buried in the cemetery at Bethel Presbyterian Church. His widow would remain here for another twenty years, dying on 16 September 1917, and she, too, was buried at Bethel Church. He had presided over important changes in the life of the plantation including the end of slavery, the difficult social and financial transition to paid farm labor, and the establishment of tenancy on his family lands. In 1886, apparently having secured the Charles Stanhope Potts lands and with a view toward the eventual division of his own real estate, Thomas Espy Potts had plats prepared of his lands. Tract #1 consisting of 111.25 acres lay on the west side of the Atlantic, Tennessee & Ohio Railroad line; tract #2, including

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 33

the family seat, consisted of 323.50 acres, making a total of 434.75 acres. One year after his death, on 8 March 1898, his three surviving children divided these lands and an additional 81.50 acres among themselves. William Robert Potts, then a bachelor and living at home with his mother, received a tract of 166.75 acres which included the family seat (MCDB 127, 452). Lillie Rebecca Potts' property included the site of the one-story Victorian-style frame house (#20), which was built about the time of her wedding on 4 November 1891 to Jacob Lafayette Smith (1864-1913) and where her two sons and daughter were born. Thomas Pritchard Potts (1857-1937), the eldest son, received a tract of 81.50 acres adjoining his sister's tract and the larger tract of 111 acres which lay along the railroad (MCDB 391, 430). As events proved neither William Robert Potts nor Thomas Pritchard Potts had children and the entire real estate holding of Thomas Espy Potts (516.25) acres eventually devolved to the second, youngest son of Lillie Rebecca Potts Smith, Clifton Eugene Smith (1895-1969), whose older brother, James Marshall Houston Smith (1892-1967), died unmarried and likewise without issue.

William Robert Potts and the Potts Plantation

William Robert Potts (1864-1946) lived in the family seat for a longer period of time than any member of the family, from his birth on 28 December 1864 until his death on 9 December 1946. On 10 February 1903, at the age of thirty-nine, he was married to Katherine Wilson (1871-1946). They were known in the family as "Uncle Will" and "Aunt Kate," remembered with great affection, and exercised certain family responsibilities for the upbringing of his sister's two sons and her daughter, Lillie Rebecca Smith (1898-1980), who was born on 17 March 1898. (Following his wife's death, Jacob Lafayette Smith was married to Cora Hawks (1882-1953) and raised a second family of three children.) The children's grandmother, Rebecca Catherine (White) Potts, who lived in the family seat until her death on 16 September 1917, also lavished attention on her only grandchildren who lived in the family seat with her until her death on 16 September 1917. During the period of nearly fifty years, from 1898 until 1946, that he held a major share of the Potts lands, William Robert Potts farmed the family fields through the tenant system; four of those tenant houses (#11, #13, #15, and #16) stand in deteriorated condition to the present. He also gave lunch to Frances Benjamin Johnston (1864-1952) when she arrived to photograph the family seat in the 1930s; her photograph, taken from the southeast, shows the weatherbeaten house in the warmth of midday sunlight and surrounded by flowering shrubs. On 29 March 1946 "Aunt Kate" Potts died and was buried in the then-established family cemetery (#28) at the west edge of the plantation; it abuts the cemetery of Mount Zion Methodist Church where Lillie Rebecca Potts Smith had been buried in the spring of 1898. A few days afterward, on 5 April 1946, William Robert Potts made his will. He died eight months later, on 9 December 1946 and was buried beside his wife. His youngest nephew, Clifton Eugene Smith, was his

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 34

principal heir and received "the three tracts of land known as the Boyles; Hoyle; Barringer places including my homeplace where I now reside" together with "all my household and personal effects contained in my home," shares of stock, and \$2,000 in cash. James Marshall Houston Smith received a "one half undivided interest in the two story brick store building in Cornelius, . . . also my eighty acres of farm land known as the Stanhope Potts place," shares of stock, and \$2,000. A tract of 140 acres on the west side of US 21 and the Atlantic, Tennessee, and Ohio Railroad, being the "farm which I inherited from my brother T. P. Potts including the land adjoining it which I purchased from C. C. Potts," was to be sold and the proceeds divided equally between the Children's Home of Winston-Salem and the Barium Spring Orphanage at Barium Springs (MCWB 5: 326).

Clifton Eugene Smith and the Renewal of the Family Plantation

Clifton Eugene Smith (1895-1969), the second son of Lillie Rebecca Potts and Jacob Lafayette Smith, was born on the Potts plantation in the house (#20) built for his parents in the early 1890s to the east of the family seat. He was graduated from Davidson College in 1918 and served as a private in Battery F, the 113th Field Artillery, at the end of World War I. On 6 May 1922 he was married to Mary Emma Reid (1891-1975), the daughter of John Ratchford Reid and Ida Hand Reid of Gaston County. They were the parents of two daughters who are the present owners of the Potts plantation lands: Miriam Smith, born on 11 July 1923; and Lilyan Reid Smith, born on 17 October 1925.

Although Smith and his elder brother had been named as executors in their father's will, entered for probate after Jacob Lafayette Smith's death on 1 May 1913--three months after his son's eighteenth birthday, the brothers renounced their right in favor of their uncle William Robert Potts. Jacob Lafayette Smith had operated a store in Cornelius, incorporated as a town in 1905, and had begun developing Smithville, a residential subdivision for blacks in west Cornelius, many of whom worked at the Cornelius mill. Smith's widow, Cora (Hawks) Smith, occupied a house near the subdivision, which is located on the south side of Catawba Avenue and remains a black residential community to the present. (The Smithville neighborhood lies on the south side of NC 73 (Catawba Avenue) and to the south of "Smithville" on the USGS Cornelius Quadrangle map, submitted with this nomination.) In 1917 and 1920 William Robert Potts as executor conveyed tracts of this Smithville property to the two brothers (MCDB 1132, 121 and book 422, 151). On 4 January 1922, the two brothers jointly acquired the one-third undivided interest in their late mother's 152-acre tract of the Potts plantation lands held by their younger sister Lillie Rebecca Smith (1898-1980) and her husband Rome George Christie (1894-1941); by the same deed they also acquired her interest in two small adjoining tracts acquired by their late father from W. R. Potts and T. P. Potts, respectively, in 1909 and 1910 (MCDB 454, 220). Two months

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 35

later, on 2 March 1922, the three siblings divided the unsold lots in Smithville (MCDB 488, 238; and book 764, 580). In 1927 Mr. and Mrs. Christie sold her share of the Smithville property to her two brothers (MCDB 764, 586).

Finally on 3 May 1922, three days before his marriage, Clifton Eugene Smith and his elder brother subdivided the 152-acre tract between themselves (MCDB 764, 584-586). This division was made so that Clifton Eugene Smith would have clear title to the late nineteenth century Victorian frame house (#20) which had been built by his parents and which he was remodeling as a home for himself and his bride to be. He, his wife, and their two daughters would make their home in this house until he completed the renovation of the family seat in 1947 and occupied the older ancestral dwelling. During the years between 1922 and 1946, Clifton Eugene Smith had certain farming operations on his part of the Potts lands and assisted his Uncle Will in the management of his agricultural operations. His principal career, however, was as a cotton broker, buying cotton from the region's farmers and selling it to buyers and manufacturers including Cannon Mills. This profitable career provided the financial means for him to undertake the renewal of the family seat, to operate the plantation as a gentleman's farm, and to provide his heirs with a substantial income enabling them to retain possession of the ancestral lands. His elder brother, James Marshall Houston Smith was graduated from Trinity College (now Duke University) and also farmed on his portion of the Potts lands. He died on 22 February 1967 leaving his brother as his principal heir; he was buried in the Mt. Zion Church cemetery.

Having spent much of his formative youth in the family seat, Clifton Eugene Smith had a marked affection for the old Potts house; his inheritance in 1946 enabled him to make it his home. When built in 1811, the house had two principal rooms on each story with one-story shed rooms carrying across the rear elevation. In the nineteenth century a kitchen ell had been added on the north side of the shed. Except for that kitchen addition, the house remained essentially as built from 1811 until 1946. While the second-story bedroom might easily have accommodated him, his wife, and their younger daughter who was then completing college, the problem for Smith was the addition of necessary, modern closet and bathroom facilities. Rather than make a two-story addition to the house to provide those needs for the second-story bedrooms, Smith decided to build a one-story wing on the east side of the main block to house a comfortable bed-sitting room for him and Mrs. Smith, a closet, and a modern bathroom. The bathroom was also accessible to the rest of the house through a door opening into the east end of the shed. A portion of the rear shed had long been used as the family dining room. Smith made the entire interior of the shed a large, long dining room. To provide exterior balance to the house, Smith erected a nearly identical one-story gable-roof block on the west end of the 1811 block for use as a garage. Prior to undertaking these renovations, Smith had lumber cut on the farm and sawn and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 36

dried at Proctor Lumber Company in Cornelius. New weatherboards were sawn and finished in a quantity to completely resheath the house whose original unpainted weatherboards, then 135 years old, and later sheathing, seen in the Johnston photograph, were badly weathered and deteriorated. In effect, the new sheathing completely melded the addition with the original house.

Clifton Eugene Smith and his wife, Mary Emma Reid, occupied the renovated family seat until their deaths on 10 August 1969 and 9 June 1975, respectively. They were buried in the Potts family cemetery (#28) at the western edge of the plantation. Their two daughters inherited the plantation with an undivided one-half interest each. Given the history of the family and their occupation of this place, this arrangement was entirely logical; both were then living in their own houses (#29 and #31) on the family plantation. Miriam Smith, the eldest daughter, was a graduate of Queens College in 1944 and in the summer of 1945 she was married to Louis Rodney Whisnant (b. 1924), the son of Lonnie Earson Whisnant and a descendant of Revolutionary soldier George Michael Whisenant. Mr. Whisnant was in the United States Marine Corps at the time and was recalled to active duty during the Korean War; during their early married life--a period during which Whisnant graduated from Davidson College in the class of 1948--they occupied the Hoyle house which stands at the west edge of the plantation, between it and the Mt. Zion Cemetery. In 1957, Miriam and Rodney Whisnant built a traditional one-story brick-veneer house (#29) at the west edge of the Potts Plantation which they continue to occupy to the present. Here they raised their daughter and only child, Miriam Jane Whisnant, who was born on 27 May 1953. Meanwhile, Lilyan Reid Smith was graduated from Queens College in 1946 and in the spring of 1948 she was married to Charles Celester Hunter (1913-1961). They were the parents of one child, Charles Eugene Hunter, who was born on 8 March 1951. Lilyan and Charles Hunter occupied the Smith Cottage (#20), erected for her grandparents and afterward occupied by her parents until 1947, for their entire married life; during the final four years of this period Mr. Hunter oversaw the farm operations on the Potts Plantation for Mr. Smith. Charles Celester Hunter died suddenly on 20 February 1961; Lilyan Smith Hunter and her son, Charles Eugene Hunter, then lived with her parents in the plantation seat (#3) from 1961 until 1965 when she completed a traditional one-story brick-veneer house (#31) between the family seat and the Whisnant house and, like them, on the north side of Smith Road leading westward to Cornelius.

Today the Potts Plantation is home to two generations of the family. Charles Eugene Hunter received an automotive engineering degree from Central Piedmont Community College, and presently makes his home with his mother. Mr. Hunter and Sandra Chitwood were married 2 October 1970 and have one son, Charles Wesley Hunter (born 1971). Charles Wesley Hunter is the ninth generation family member who works part time on the plantation during the busy harvesting season. Miriam Jane Whisnant, a graduate of the University of North Carolina

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 37

at Greensboro, was married to Richard Norris Workman on 2 June 1990 in a ceremony on the lawn of the Potts family seat (#3). In 1993 the couple erected a substantial late Colonial Revival brick-veneer house (#35) at the edge of a woodland, on the south side of Smith Road. With the completion of this house, there are five houses standing on the Potts plantation erected by four generations of the family. The family seat (#3) remains as it stood at the death of Mary Emma Reid Smith in the summer of 1975, filled with the furnishings of four generations of the Potts family spanning the years from 1812 until 1975. It remains a gathering place for the family whose members have never long been beyond its view.

Architectural Context

Although the appearance of the house(s) occupied by John Potts and his son Robert Potts, Sr., is not known at present--and its size and location can only be determined by coordinated deed research and archaeological investigation, the construction of a new family seat by Robert Potts, Jr., in 1811 clearly represented a presence and social status in the community. Without surviving evidence to the contrary, it can safely be supposed that John Potts and his son Robert Potts, Sr., followed regional patterns and lived in a log house(s) that may (or may not) have been covered by weatherboards and could have had Georgian-style finish. Although this 1811 house was also built of log construction, its tall weatherboarded elevations and Federal-style architectural finish marked it as a probably more sophisticated dwelling than its likely predecessors on the Potts Plantation. The progression from a smallish log house, weatherboarded or not, to a substantial symmetrical two-story, three-bay weatherboarded log house like the one built for Potts in 1811 was the normal one for families in Piedmont North Carolina. Few of those early houses erected by members of the first or second generation of settlers in the region survive in the Piedmont. Those that do, including the stone houses erected by Michael Braun in 1766 in Rowan County and Hezekiah Alexander by 1774 in Mecklenburg County, are exceptional buildings reflecting unique circumstances rather than the typical experience; the closest parallel to the Potts family's original dwelling may be the log Hoyle family house in Gaston County (NR 1993) whose complex architectural history is only now being understood.

The Federal-style house built by Robert Potts in 1811 belongs to the first identifiable major group of surviving plantation seats erected in the Piedmont, and within the group it is one of the earliest. The somewhat idiosyncratic house built by James Latta in the nearby Hopewell Church community dates to the late 1790s; however, the Potts house is more closely akin to the frame houses built in Mecklenburg County in the 1810s and 1820s, including Holly Bend, the seat of Robert Davidson; Oak Lawn, the seat of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 38

Benjamin Wilson Davidson; and the house, later known as Beaver Dam, that was built about 1829 by William Lee Davidson II as the seat of the neighboring plantation on the east. Those houses were succeeded in turn by ever more impressive houses such as Cedar Grove, a large brick house built in the early 1830s for James Galbraith Torrance, a kinsman by marriage to Robert Potts; and Mount Mourne built to the north in Iredell County in 1836-1837 for Major Rufus Reid and his second wife, Elizabeth Latta Davidson, a daughter of James Latta and the widow of Benjamin Wilson Davidson.

Except for the addition of the one-story kitchen ell in the later nineteenth century, and the replacement of the east gable end chimney (for reasons now unknown/storm damage?), the seat of the Potts Plantation remained virtually unaltered from its construction in 1811 until early 1947; nor had its weatherboarded elevations ever been painted. By the 1930s, when Frances Benjamin Johnston photographed the house, it had achieved a warm mellow patina, even if a bit worn at its edges; the house was also then covered with a wood shingle roof. In 1946 when Clifton Eugene Smith inherited the house at the age of fifty-one, he had spent his life either in the house or within its shadow at the Smith cottage; his affection for the house was strong and his initiatives for its preservation reflected the thinking of the time.

During the post-World War II Colonial Revival period, a certain freedom of approach characterized both new design in that mode and the restoration and refitting of eighteenth, sometimes colonial, houses and early-nineteenth century dwellings. The shelter magazines of the 1940s and 1950s frequently carried articles on the refurbishment of old places and their refitting for modern living; the addition of new wings and a garage were entirely typical. Mr. Smith's work here was undertaken in the spirit of the times, well before the strictures of later-twentieth century restoration theory were developed.

His efforts were sympathetic just as the undertaking reflected a longfelt family commitment to place. Timber was cut in the plantation woodlands and hauled a mile or so into Cornelius to be sawn, dried, and finished. Faced with the requirements for a bedroom with adjoining closet and bathroom facilities--and the advance of his own age--he designed a first-story east wing to contain these new rooms. The garage addition on the east gable end was built to provide architectural balance; the shelter of the automobile was a secondary consideration. An examination of the Johnston photograph indicates the width of the original weatherboards and, it is apparent, that Mr. Smith undertook to replicate the appearance of that sheathing in 1947. He also demonstrated a certain prescience in retaining the intact finish of the front first-story elevation behind the porch and the somewhat unusual stucco-covered brick piers that in the Johnston photograph were also showing their age. At this distance, and short of architectural archaeology, a statement of certainty cannot be made as to whether they are original to the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 39

1811 construction or somewhat later. If later, the likely point of addition would have been in the mid 1830s when Robert Potts, Jr., was serving on the committee to build the first Davidson College buildings and the brick masons were busily at their work there, a mile and a half away. The window sash, lacking the protection of paint over the course of 136 years, had also deteriorated and required replacement; this, too, Mr. Smith undertook in kind and stored the old original sash in the attic.

While the house built in 1811 and renovated in 1947 possesses architectural significance as an important Federal-style house renewed in the post-World War II Colonial Revival movement, the house's chief merit is the remarkably intact finish of the 1811 interior which survives virtually intact. The two-room plan house retains its original pine floors, flush sheathed walls and ceiling, six-panel doors with hardware, molded door and window surrounds, and a full complement of original mantels. The rooms are also enriched with original molded chair rails. The hall/living room was the most elaborately finished room in the house and features a scheme of decorative painting that was renewed and repainted in 1947. Paint is used to outline panels in the wainscot, to enrich the effect of the six-panel doors and the staircase. The stair rises to the west along the north wall and the free handrail is replicated on the wall where a painted shadow wainscot carries on a diagonal with the stair to the corner where the stair turns and its rise in a second flight of steps is enclosed. The only change of note that occurred on the interior was the removal of a partition wall in the rear shed to create a larger dining room.

Although Charles Stanhope Potts, the son of Robert Potts, Jr., is believed to have built a house on the tract of family land acquired from his father in 1847, the year after his marriage, that house does not survive; archaeological investigation would confirm its location and size. The next built surviving house on the plantation was erected in the early 1890s for a granddaughter of Robert Potts, Jr., Lillie Rebecca Potts, and her husband Jacob Lafayette Smith. The Smith Cottage (#20) is typical of many such one-story frame Victorian houses built as farmhouses or as town and village residences in Mecklenburg County in the late nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Like many of those houses, the Smith Cottage was updated in the 1920s with Bungalow-style porch supports. Four simple, one-story, side gabled, frame tenant houses, built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, survive on the plantation and reflect the type of modest dwelling erected by landowners for individual tenant families. These are, at present, the only known tenant houses surviving in Mecklenburg County. These buildings, although deteriorated, are especially important since "No postbellum one-story tenant houses were identified in the inventory" of historic buildings in Mecklenburg County, a survey in 1987-1988 by Mary Beth Gatz, which formed the basis of the Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Historic and Architectural

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 40

Resources of Rural Mecklenburg County, North Carolina" (Section F, p. 10).
This property was not included in that survey.

The architectural significance of the Potts Plantation is further enhanced by the survival of a group of log and frame outbuildings which date from both the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. The oldest building of this group is the log smokehouse (#4) standing to the northeast of the plantation seat. Included in this collection of outbuildings are cribs, granaries, a frame barn, and poultry houses that were erected at the farm seat, at the Smith Cottage, and at the tenant houses. These outbuildings are representative of surviving Mecklenburg County examples which were recorded in the 1987-1988 survey and which form the basis for the presentation on outbuildings in Section F, pages twenty-two through twenty-six of "Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg County, North Carolina."

Agriculture and Historic Archaeology Context

For 244 years the core residual tract included in this nomination, the heart of the 636-acre parcel acquired by John Potts in 1753, has been the site of agricultural operations carried on uninterruptedly by the eight generations who have owned and occupied the plantation. Nowhere else in Mecklenburg County, and in few other instances in North Carolina--one example being the Knox Farm (Historic District) in Rowan County (NR, 1985)--has such a substantial tract of land been owned and farmed continuously by a single family for such a long period of time. This continuous cultivation is important in support of the larger agricultural and historic archaeological significance of the Potts Plantation as a cultural landscape on which the successive stages of settlement and agricultural development in Piedmont North Carolina have occurred. The plantation evidences changes in land use through time that are reflected in buildings, structures, architectural ruins, sites, and remains, above ground and below, that in combination represent settlement, three sequential historic agriculture phases, and the current cash crop farming carried on by Charles Eugene Hunter (b. 1951), the eighth generation to cultivate these lands.

The first settlement period (1753-1810) at the Potts Plantation begins with the acquisition of the 636-acre tract in 1753 by John Potts who immediately occupied the property and remained here until his death about 1783. The plantation remained the home of his son Robert Potts, Sr. (ca. 1745-1821). Although there are no extant structures from this period, the general lack of later disturbance makes it likely that archaeological remains of the main house and ancillary structures will be present. Data gathered from these resources could yield information concerning architectural details and domestic materials establishing settlement period class preferences and life styles. The plantation period (1811-ca. 1875) begins in 1811, the year in

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 41

which Mr. Potts conveyed land to his son and namesake, Robert Potts, Jr., who built the surviving plantation seat (#3), the smokehouse (#4), and the log barn which forms the centerpiece of the log barn work area (#7). Although no above grade evidence is present, the oral tradition places a slave quarter to the east of the main house. Lack of soil disturbance on this area makes it likely that archaeological remains will be present. Data available from this slave quarter could supply information concerning lifeways of enslaved populations (Fairbanks 1974, Ferguson 1992, Orser 1988, Otto 1984). Comparison of excavated materials from the main house and the slave quarters could provide data concerning status variations, degrees of acculturation, and culture drift (Orser 1988, Otto 1984). Mr. Potts, Jr., died in 1859 and it was his son Thomas Espy Potts (1829-1898) who presided over the plantation through the course of the Civil War, through the emancipation of the family slaves, and the difficult period after the war in which freedmen and women were hired and paid to perform the same labor they had earlier undertaken for Mr. Potts as their master. Their presence is recalled not in buildings but the plantation's slave cemetery (#10).

Like other impoverished plantation owners in the postbellum period, Thomas Espy Potts also initiated the tenant or sharecropping system on the Potts Plantation. This third stage of agricultural development (ca. 1875-1961) would be continued for nearly a century by his son William Robert Potts (1864-1946) and his grandson Clifton Eugene Smith (1895-1969). The ruined remains of five separate tenant farm complexes (#11, #13, #15-#17) and three surviving buildings (#12, #14, #18) reflect this long period in the history of the plantation. The lack of any apparent ground disturbance in the vicinity of the tenant houses presents the strong possibility of intact archaeological remains associated with these structures. Data available in these resources could provide information concerning the affect of tenancy on culture (Orser 1988), cultural adaptation to changing economic situations, and culturally determined structure placement and space usage (Clauser 1985). Tenancy was one form of dispersed agriculture; another form is represented by the interfamily division of lands to form a separate inholding farmed by Jacob Lafayette Smith from the 1890s into the early 1910s and by his son Clifton Eugene Smith from 1922 until 1946.

At the death of William Robert Potts in 1946, Clifton Eugene Smith inherited his uncle's property and he consolidated the principal lands of the Potts Plantation under his ownership. The five tenant farmers on the plantation remained in place under Mr. Smith's supervision and this arrangement continued in place until 1957 when (for health reasons) Mr. Smith placed the management of the farm and its tenants in the hands of his son-in-law, Charles Celester Hunter. The unexpected death of Mr. Hunter in 1961, representing both the death of Mr. Smith's son-in-law and the death of his capable farm manager, spelled the formal end of tenancy on the Potts Plantation.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 42

While the renovation of the family seat in 1947 had signified a certain renewal in the fortunes of the Potts Plantation, the death of Mr. Hunter, the loss of a very capable farm manager, and the formal end of the tenant system here, signified a change in the agricultural operation from one of tenancy and dispersed farming to the era of the gentleman farmer (1961-1980). Most of the old tenant fields were combined and planted in grass for the herd of Hertford beef cattle that Mr. Smith developed and others were planted for hay; there was little in the way of diversified farming. At least two of the old African American tenants stayed on as family retainers, working as paid laborers and occupying the same houses (#13 and #17) they had lived in as tenant farmers. After Mr. Smith's death in 1969, the herd of Hertford cattle was sold, and the plantation's fields were leased successively to Lander Bustle and Joe Poplin who grew mostly corn and hay here through the 1970s. However, the retainers remained on the place into the later 1970s doing occasional work for Mrs. Smith, who lived in the seat until her death in 1975, or her daughters who were both living on the property. The present, final stage of agricultural development, the period of cash crop farming, was initiated in 1980 when Charles Eugene Hunter returned to the Potts Plantation and began raising soybeans, small grains, and hay as cash crops.

These sequential stages in the social and economic history of the plantation are also reflected in very specific changes in the spatial uses of its 510 acres. Until archaeological study can be undertaken, the site(s) of the family's initial dwelling(s) and occupation during the settlement period (1753-1810) will remain unconfirmed. However, a persistent family tradition places the "old house" on the northeast side of the Rocky River. In 1811 when Robert Potts moved to establish his own household, his father conveyed to him a tract of 96 acres in the west half of the original 636-acre holding. Here Robert Potts, Jr., built a two-story Federal-style log house. A now-lost log kitchen, a log barn, and a log smokehouse on what appear to be the highest elevations on the entire tract. These buildings marked the beginning of the plantation period which continued until ca. 1875; during this time activity was centered on the plantation seat domestic grounds (#2) which included the slave quarters to the near east of the seat and the log barn work area (#7). These facilities, near the western edge of the larger plantation, remained the center of plantation life into the mid 1870s.

Broad geographic shifts in the occupation and use of plantation lands occurred in the transition to tenancy and dispersed farming about 1875; these remained in effect through 1961. The acreage of the plantation was broken up in a series of five tenant farms, anchored by a house and various buildings, that were set apart through the central and eastern reaches of the property. While the master and his slaves had lived in very close proximity, and within calling distance from 1811 into the 1860s, the later nineteenth-century owners

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 43

of the property established the small tenant farms away from the family seat, reflecting the important differences in their social relationships and a lesser interest in personal contact between owner and tenant than had been enjoyed by master and slave. At the end of the century dispersed agriculture of another form occurred here when the portion of the holding actually farmed by members of the Potts family was divided; in 1891 Lillie Rebecca Potts and Jacob Lafayette Smith were married and established their own household and farm to the east of the farm seat on a tract defined as 152 acres by deed in 1898. From 1891/1898 until 1946 members of the Potts family operated two separate but adjoining and related farming operations while five tenants toiled on the acreage to the south and east.

Tenancy and dispersed farming came to an end in 1961 with the death of Charles Celester Hunter, Mr. Smith's farm manager. The working center of the farm returned to the farm seat (#3) which had been renewed and occupied by Clifton Eugene Smith in 1947. The nearby Smith cottage farm had remained a secondary center of operation during its occupation by Mr. Smith's daughter Lilyan and Mr. Hunter who supervised the farm operations. It, too, was abandoned as a family residence in 1961, but rented for about ten years. Clifton Eugene Smith allowed family retainers to live on in two tenant houses (#13 and #17), and consolidated the small fields and tracts of the former tenant farms into pastures for his cattle and fields in which to raise hay. In 1957 and 1964-1965 Mr. Smith's daughters erected new houses (#29 and #31) of their own to the west of the plantation seat and at the very western edge of the plantation. Mrs. Smith would live on in the plantation seat until her death in 1975; however, the Federal-period house has never again been occupied by the family. The movement to live at the west edge of the holding was compounded in 1993 when Miriam Jane Whisnant Workman and her husband erected the fifth (surviving) family house (#35) here.

I. Settlement Period (1753-1810)

The Potts Plantation presents the particularly important potential, through historic archaeological investigation, to yield significant information on lifeways and agriculture in the first half-century of Mecklenburg County's history from its organization out of Anson County in 1762 until 1811 when Robert Potts, Jr., received the land on which he built the house in which he and his wife "commenced house keeping" in 1812. This half-century overlaps the longer period from 1753-1810 during which two generations of the Potts family occupied this property, but for which no standing structure survives. It is a period for which there is little accurate published information on agriculture in the county and few surviving buildings to indicate the scale and patterns of daily life. The two known surviving houses in Mecklenburg County which can be conclusively dated to this period, the Hezekiah Alexander House (NR, 1970) of 1774 and Latta Place (NR, 1972), begun by James Latta in

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 44

1799, are important houses built for men of affluence as are two surviving brick houses built by William Johnston (White Oak Plantation, NR 1978) and John Orr (William T. Alexander House) in the 1790s or later. None of those four buildings survive on lands as extensive and undisturbed as those of the Robert Potts's house.

The builders of the above houses were people of probably larger fortunes than those of John Potts and his son Robert who lived on these lands and who are perhaps more typical of the representative settler in colonial Mecklenburg County. It is uncertain, at present, whether John Potts and his son Robert Potts, who died ca. 1783 and in 1821, respectively, occupied one house or two different dwellings on this plantation. The possibility also exists that John Potts may well have erected a small log cabin on acquiring the property in 1753 and subsequently built a larger log house and that Robert Potts, Sr., who married Elizabeth McKeown in the early 1770s built a third house here. Archaeological investigation on this property, based on surviving deeds and their internal references, has the potential to answer those particular questions about this plantation and, in turn, to provide insight into the ways and manner by which the first people of European descent to settle in this area went about establishing themselves on their new lands and converting essentially virgin, wooded acreage and open savannahs into productive self-sustaining farms.

Because of the manner in which good well-watered lands on creeks and rivers were first taken up by the arriving settlers in the backcountry, the agricultural value of this property was appreciated and understood by John Potts who knew he could raise his family here. Beyond the fact that certain crops were raised for consumption by family and farm animals, the history of agriculture in the eighteenth century remains largely unexplored and unexplained. While there was trade with Charleston, South Carolina, by way of Cheraw, South Carolina, it was limited because of inconvenience and expense, and most crops, including corn and grains were consumed on the plantation, converted to meal, flour, or spirits, or fed to cattle, hogs, and perhaps sheep. This is the pattern of agriculture discussed in the essay on "Agriculture" published in 1912 in the SOIL SURVEY OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA.

Between 1782 and 1795 a considerable area of cotton was planted in the county. Cattle raising became of more importance, and most of the animals were sold in Charleston or Virginia. The decade between 1800 and 1810 was one of the most prosperous periods prior to the Civil War. The production of cotton increased until this became the important crop, although enough grain, corn, meat, and other products were grown for home use. The surplus of cotton, flax, sheep, cattle, and distilled liquors was sold in Charleston (SSMCNC, 10).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 45

The sketch on agriculture next includes the statement that "Mecklenburg was the leading county in North Carolina in the development of cotton growing." The settlement period on the Potts Plantation covers the long transitional years during which citizens moved gradually from a subsistence form of agriculture to a more developed agricultural economy, allowing for the production of cash crops, that provided the basis for the plantation period here and throughout the Catawba River Valley. Historic archaeology at the Potts Plantation has the potential to yield historical information critical to understanding how the settler went about establishing himself and, once established, how he prospered through two generations so that the settler John Potts' grandson, Robert Potts, Jr., could build a substantial well-finished house that defined his status in the community as a small but substantial planter.

II. The Plantation Period (1811-ca. 1875)

It is possible that the construction of the plantation seat (#3) in 1811--on the heels of the century's prosperous first decade--came as a result of profits realized from cotton production; the profits from cotton probably supported the erection of Robert Davidson's Holly Bend (NR, 1972), several miles to the west on the Catawba River. Although it cannot now be said for certain when cotton was first raised on the Potts Plantation, cotton was being grown here by 1820. On 19 December 1820 Robert Potts, Sr., conveyed 187 acres to his son Edwin Potts; one of the boundary calls for this tract, on the waters of Rocky River, ran "a few poles in the cotton patch" (MCDB 19, 375).

In addition to the construction of the plantation seat, Robert Potts erected a log smokehouse (#4) and a log barn which survives as an architectural ruin (#7). He also is known to have erected a log kitchen which served the family into the 1860s or so, but it has been lost. The other lost buildings which composed a part of the plantation seat domestic grounds (#2) were the log slave quarters which stood on the north side of Smith Road and to the east of the immediate house yard, just outside the grass-covered area now maintained as the front lawn. Robert Potts, Jr., probably also built a log corn crib and a log granary in the vicinity of the log barn, in the area comprising the log barn work area (#7). Two surviving log corn cribs of the type that could have stood here survive in Mecklenburg County on the McAuley Farm and the Craven House farmyard and are cited (Section F, p. 24) in the Mecklenburg County Multiple Property Documentation Form.

During the next decades up to the Civil War the combination of statistics reported in the population schedules showing slave ownership and the agricultural schedules indicating crop production provide insight into agricultural operations on the plantation. The survival of the slave cemetery

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 46

(#10) in the woodlands in the northeast quadrant of the plantation further confirms their relationship to the operation and history of the Potts Plantation. In the 1830 United States Census, Robert Potts was head of an eighteen member household which included nine family members and nine slaves; of those nine slaves all except one male were under the age of thirty-six. By the census of 1840 the number of his slaves had increased to sixteen; eight were male and eight were female. Five of the males were between the ages of ten and twenty-four and would have provided labor on the plantation as did the two older male slaves. In 1850 Robert Potts was listed as the owner of ten slaves while his sons Charles Stanhope and Julius Robinson Potts each owned three slaves. In 1850, the first year in which the United States Census included an Agricultural Schedule, Robert Potts, Jr., reported a farm valued at \$2,000 with 200 improved acres and 389 unimproved acres; the value of his farm implements and machinery was \$460. His livestock included seven horses, one mule, ten milk cows, fifteen beef cattle, twenty-two sheep, and forty hogs with a total value of \$637. His principal crops were corn (1,000 bushels), oats (250 bushels), and wheat (75 bushels). He also grew sweet potatoes and Irish potatoes. Butter (60 lbs.) was made on the plantation and six pounds of wool was reported. The one surprising statistic was a single bale of ginned cotton.

In comparative terms, Robert Potts was an average planter in his community; he lived comfortably and educated his sons at Davidson College. He was a member of the rural gentry who were prosperous and lived well; however, he and the other planters on the Rocky River and in upper Mecklenburg County lived in the larger shadow of wealthy planters, including Robert Davidson--said to be Mecklenburg County's largest slaveholder, who had a plantation on the Catawba River valued at \$16,000 in 1850 comprising 1,000 improved acres and 1,803 unimproved acres.

Robert Potts died on 20 November 1859, and his son Thomas Espy Potts appears in the 1860 United States Census as the head of the household centered on the Potts Plantation; he had married Rebecca Catherine White in 1852, and the couple had at least four children born by 1860. Thomas Espy Potts owned five slaves in 1860 and his farm of eighty cultivated acres and 300 unimproved acres was valued at \$2,500. He owned three horses, one mule, two milk cows, six beef cattle, sixteen sheep, fifteen hogs with a total value of \$390. During the year up to 1 June 1860, he produced 400 bushels of corn, eighty bushels of wheat, forty bushels of oats, five pounds of wool, and five bales of cotton.

For reasons that are now unclear, there are two entries in the Agricultural Schedule for Thomas E. Potts, one directly after the other, in the United States Census of 1870. Potts had a total of 130 acres in cultivation, thirty acres in woodlands, and 191 unimproved acres with a total value of \$2,820.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 47

His livestock consisted of two horses, three mules, five milk cows, eleven beef cattle, seven sheep, and thirty-five hogs. He produced 600 bushels of corn and 120 bushels of oats. Potts's household (#162 in Dewesee Township) consisted of Mrs. Potts and their four children. The next household (#163) recorded by the enumerator was headed by Lydia Potts, a fifty-five year old black female, whose profession was "domestic servant"; it is likely that she and a daughter Dora, age 11, and also a "domestic servant," worked for the family and lived on in one of the old slave cabins.

The plantation period, spanning the years from 1811 to ca. 1875, is the second longest period of sustained agricultural development on the property, and for fifty-odd years of this era, slaves comprised the labor force. Some of them, including Lydia and Dora Potts, listed in the 1870 Federal Census, apparently stayed on the place for some years after the end of the Civil War and worked as domestic servants for the Thomas Espy Potts family. Today there is no visible evidence of the long existence of these slaves and servants on the Potts Plantation, except the woodland slave cemetery (#10); their houses, near the plantation seat, have long since disappeared. Historical archaeological investigation on the Potts Plantation has the potential to yield information critical to our understanding of the internal social and economic operations which formed the daily life of the place during this period. Such study would add to our knowledge of slavery in the Piedmont, acculturation of the slave population, and cultural adaptation of enforced behavior.

Three particular areas on the plantation are archaeologically significant in this regard. The first is the plantation seat domestic grounds (#2) which comprise the plantation seat, the smokehouse, a now-lost log kitchen, and the lost log slave quarters which stood at the east edge of the house yard. Investigation in this area would provide information on the daily life of the planter family, the life of their slaves who lived in close proximity, and the interaction of master and slave within close grounds which were home to the owner and the owned. The second area that is likely to yield significant information through archaeological investigation is the log barn work area (#7) which is focused on the architectural ruins of the plantation's great log barn which was both the center of farm life and a reflection of its prosperity. Like the plantation seat domestic grounds, this area has been the center of continuous human activity, to a greater or lesser extent, since ca. 1811; archaeological investigation has the potential to yield important information on the sequence of activities which occurred here and how they reflected change over the cycles of agricultural development on the plantation. The third major site relevant to this period is the slave cemetery (#10) which is located in a deciduous woodland on the northeast side of the Rocky River. It is marked by some dozen visible depressions in the woodland floor and a covering of evergreen periwinkle which has escaped beyond the probable bounds of the original burying ground. Investigation of this site

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 48

has the potential to yield significant information of African American burial customs, possible family relationships between the burials that can be coordinated with census data, and, a truer record of the actual number of slaves interred here. The possibility exists that some interments occurred here after Emancipation, reflecting the wishes of freedmen and women to be buried with deceased members of their family.

III. Tenancy and Dispersed Agriculture Period (ca. 1875-1961)

The pattern of general farming represented by Potts's report to the 1870s census taker held generally true in 1880 when the report was for acreage cultivated, livestock held, and crops produced in 1879. He reported seventy-five acres in cultivation, ten acres in woodland, and 215 acres "including old fields" that were not improved; the value of the farm was reduced to \$2,000. Thirty acres planted in corn produced 400 bushels, four acres of wheat produced nineteen bushels, and thirty acres of cotton produced thirteen bales. It would appear likely that much of the \$70 of fertilizer Potts purchased in 1879 was applied to the cotton fields for this cash crop. He grew cow peas, fifteen bushels of Irish potatoes, and twenty-five bushels of sweet potatoes. Potts also reported forty-five gallons of molasses and fifty pounds of honey as products of his farm. Thomas Espy Potts's farming operation was entirely typical of its time and place when compared with the analysis of agriculture published in 1915.

It is unclear at present precisely when Thomas Espy Potts ceased to use hired help, probably black, in the 1870s and 1880s, to operate his farm, together with the help of his sons, and adopted the tenant farming system which was employed by William Robert Potts for virtually the entire period he held the farm. Thomas Espy Potts operated the farm until his death on 13 April 1897; however, its management during the 1890s was probably in the hands of his son William Robert Potts who remained on the farm with his parents and did not marry until 1903, at thirty-nine years of age. He would own and operate the plantation's core acreage until his death in 1946. The surviving tenant houses and their outbuildings (#11-#18) on the plantation were erected in the closing decades of the nineteenth century or the opening years of this century. William Robert Potts probably built the crib (#8) which stands near the log barn.

In the 1890s three events resulted in important changes in the life and operation of the farm. Thomas Espy Potts died on 13 April 1897. Eleven months later, on 8 March 1898, his real estate holding was divided among his three surviving children. William Robert Potts acquired the plantation seat and farm acreage of 166.75 acres. His brother Thomas Pritchard Potts received two tracts (111.00 acres and 81.50 acres) including the larger tract on the west side of the railroad, outside the boundary of the nominated acreage where

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 49

he built a house and lived until his death. Their sister, Lillie Rebecca (Potts) Smith received a tract of 152 acres on the east side of the plantation seat. In 1891 she was married to Jacob Lafayette Smith, and it is likely that the couple built the one-story frame house, known as the Smith cottage (#20), about the time of their marriage, and were living there in March 1898 when the division occurred. Jacob Lafayette Smith apparently farmed portions of the larger Potts Plantation on his own or cooperatively with his brothers-in-law, between 1891 and March 1898. However, from March 1898--and after his wife's death on 7 June 1898--he farmed the fields of her 152 acres, probably up to his death on 1 May 1913, although he had left the Smith cottage and built a house with his second wife Cora Hawks Smith (1882-1953) on the west side of Cornelius. Owing to the persistence of vernacular building patterns for farm outbuildings, the frame farm outbuildings, standing near the Smith cottage and its barn (#24) and built by him or his son Clifton Eugene Smith (1895-1969) have a consistent appearance and finish.

From the division of the Thomas Espy Potts property in 1898 until the death of William Robert Potts in 1946, the majority of the lands comprising the Potts Plantation were essentially operated as two separately-owned but family related farming operations by William Robert Potts and his brother-in-law Jacob Lafayette Smith to ca. 1913 and afterward by his son Clifton Eugene Smith, and five smaller tenant farms. Although Thomas Pritchard Potts (1857-1937) held a tract of 81.50 acres of the old plantation lands which he probably cultivated, his major farming operation was on the 111.00-acre tract on the west side of the railroad and outside the boundary of this nomination; today it belongs to Lilyan Smith Huner and Miriam Smith Whisnant who own the Potts Plantation. According to family tradition William Robert Potts did not take an active role in the agricultural operations of his lands beyond the supervision of the tenants who worked the land for him. While the term "tenant farmer" is used in the usual understanding of the word, it is possible that one or more of these men and their families worked either as sharecroppers or simply as laborers for Mr. Potts and lived in one of the five houses on the place. At the death of Thomas Pritchard Potts in 1937, William Robert Potts was his heir and the two tracts of 111.00 and 81.50 acres were reunited with other family lands under William Robert Potts's ownership. After 1937, part or all of the Thomas Pritchard Potts property was farmed by his nephew James Marshall Houston Smith (1892-1967), the elder, bachelor brother of Clifton Eugene Smith, who also occupied his uncle's house until his death.

From William Robert Potts's death on 9 December 1946 until 1957, Clifton Eugene Smith generally supervised agricultural operations on the Potts Plantation whose lands were consolidated under his ownership; he was the principal heir of his "Uncle Will" and, later, of his brother James Marshall Houston Smith. In the late 1940s and 1950s he continued the tenant farming

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 50

system while pursuing a career off the farm as a cotton broker. While cotton was apparently discontinued as a cash crop in the 1950s, the usual crops of corn, small grains, and hay were raised here. From 1957 to 1961, the supervision of the tenants and the day-to-day management of the plantation was entrusted to Charles Celester Hunter who had married Mr. Smith's younger daughter and occupied the Smith cottage with her during their entire married life. Tenancy formally ended on the Potts Plantation with Mr. Hunter's death in 1961.

The historic resources (#11-#30) associated with the tenancy and dispersed agriculture period (ca. 1875-1961) are the largest in number for any of the plantation's five settlement and agriculture periods, and they are the most complex. They are also among the most important in the area of historic archaeology for their potential to yield significant information critical to our understanding of the history, practice, and evolution of farm tenancy and dispersed agriculture over the course of some eighty-nine years. Except for the Potts cemetery (#28), the Whisnant house (#29), and its storage building (#30), all of these resources are associated with two important themes in the agricultural history of the plantation. When Mary Beth Gatza completed the architectural survey of Mecklenburg County in 1987-1988 she found no known tenant houses surviving in the county at any of the properties and sites she recorded. Hindsight suggests that she did not revisit or survey properties such as the Potts Plantation that had already been designated as historic properties by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission or that were listed in the National Register. As a result she wrote "No postbellum one-story tenant houses were identified in the inventory (Section F, page 10)" in her description of property types in "Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg County, North Carolina" (NR, 1991). However, at that time four frame tenant houses were standing here on the Potts Plantation in relatively good condition.

The five tenant complexes and their related buildings (#11-#18) are contributing sites of historic archaeological significance for their potential to yield important information essential to understanding the character, organization, and practice of tenancy on this plantation. While the circumstances of tenancy here are particular to this place, as are specific artifacts data and information to be retrieved through archaeological investigation, the knowledge to be gained can be interpreted and evaluated in the larger context of Mecklenburg County and the Catawba River Valley. In his two-volume HISTORY OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY AND THE CITY OF CHARLOTTE, published in 1903, Daniel Augustus Tompkins noted the then current state of agriculture in Mecklenburg County; his statistics were probably based on the 1900 Census.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPotts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 51

It is noticeable that as Mecklenburg has grown richer and more populous, the farms have increased in number and decreased in size. The average number of acres in a farm in the county is seventy-five. There is only one which contains more than a thousand acres. There are 227,995 acres of land and the 4,190 farms are occupied by 1,226 owners, 290 part owners, 22 owners and tenants, 55 managers, 631 cash paying tenants, and 1,966 share tenants. Sixty percent of the farms are occupied by white people, and 40 percent by colored people (Vol. 1, p. 151).

Whether the tenants at the Potts Plantation in 1900/1903 were then cash-paying or share tenants is not known; however, the more important fact is that there were at least 2,597 tenant houses standing in Mecklenburg County at that time. These four houses were among that number and they are the only four of those 2,597 which are known to survive. As a result, the value of the five tenant complex sites and their related buildings (#11-#18) have an unparalleled potential to contribute to our understanding of this long, important stage in the agricultural history of the county and this place. The four surviving, although deteriorated houses at complexes #1 through #4 (#11, #13, #15, and #16) precisely mark the location of the dwellings on these farms and the deteriorated barn and surviving granary at tenant complex #5 (#17-#18) identify the location of the fifth tenant arm. These architectural ruins provide information on the size of such dwellings, nearly always inferior to owner-occupied houses, the number of rooms, the finish of each, and the general character of domestic and work spaces and grounds occupied by tenants. The two surviving granaries (#12 and #18) provide important information on the scale of these small farming operations, which can be supplemented and enhanced through archaeological investigation. Yet another important factor adding value to these sites is that they are located through the center and eastern parts of the plantation reflecting spatial divisions within the overall property that were defined ca. 1875 and which remained in observation at least until 1961.

Tenancy was one form of dispersed agriculture occurring on the Potts Plantation; another was the establishment of a second family-owned farming operation within its boundaries. This occurred about 1891 when Lillie Rebecca Potts was married to Jacob Lafayette Smith, and the couple installed themselves in the Smith cottage (#20). The domestic grounds at the Smith cottage complex (#19) and the Smith cottage barn work area (#23), and their standing buildings (#20-#22, #24-#27), occupied as a separate household and farm from 1891/1898 to 1946, have the potential to yield significant information on the operation of the smaller Mecklenburg County farm and to yield data that, on a comparative basis, would enable us to understand important social, economic, and agricultural distinctions between a small owner-occupied farm and five tenant farms that existed side-by-side here for over half a century on the Potts Plantation.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 52

IV. The Gentleman Farmer Period (1961-1980)

Although tenancy did not end on the Potts Plantation until 1961 with the death of Charles Celester Hunter, the farm manager, its demise and the period of gentleman farming was presaged by the renovation of the family seat in 1947 and the increasing use of outside capital, from Mr. Smith's work as a cotton broker, to maintain his family and the plantation. Five years later in 1952, Mr. Smith suffered a heart attack and, recovered, he supervised the farm and its tenants until 1957 when his health forced him to place the plantation's management in the hands of his son-in-law. This arrangement worked smoothly until the unexpected death of Mr. Hunter in 1961. By this time tenant farming had ceased to be economically profitable or viable as an agricultural practice; however, several of the farmers had been on the plantation for much of their respective lives, and they were loath to leave; Mr. Smith was reluctant to remove them, and as events prove at least two of them remained on the place as retainers into the later 1970s. The small fields of the former tenant farms were combined into larger tracts and mostly planted with grass for pasturing the herd of Hertford beef cattle which Mr. Smith developed here. Clifton Eugene Smith continued to raise Hertford cattle until succumbing to a fatal heart attack on 10 August 1969.

Mr. Smith's death forced his widow and two daughters to make another series of decisions concerning the agricultural operations on the Potts Plantation. They quickly realized they could not maintain the herd of beef cattle and they were sold within six months of Mr. Smith's death. The continued cultivation of the plantation fields was handled through leasing. Its fields were immediately rented to a Cornelius area farmer, Lander Bustle, who raised corn and made hay from the pastures and alfalfa fields which he planted. Later in the 1970s, Joe Poplin, a larger farmer in Stanly County, leased the fields and mostly raised corn through the 1970s. It was in this period, the later 1970s, that the last of the family's aged retainers left the plantation and the five tenant houses and the Smith cottage all became vacant.

V. The Period of Cash Crop Farming (1980 to the Present)

While leasing the fields of the Potts Plantation provided a certain income and kept its acreage in cultivation, it was not the solution for the good, long-term management of the property. As a young boy Charles Eugene Hunter (b. 1951) had watched his father supervise the farming on the plantation until he unexpectedly died when the boy was not yet ten years of age. Thereafter, through the 1960s, he likewise, accompanied his grandfather, Mr. Smith, as he went about developing his herd of Hertford cattle. These memories and interests held through the 1970s and in 1980 Charles Eugene Hunter decided to return to the farm and cultivate its fields himself. About 1981 he erected an

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 53

equipment shed (#34) behind the Hunter house (#31) and in the later 1980s he erected an equipment shed (#9) to the east of the plantation's log barn. In 1992 he added a shop (#33) at the rear (north) of the Hunter House. During these years since 1980 he has raised soybeans, small grains, and hay in the plantation fields. At present he has 102 acres under cultivation.

ENDNOTE

1. The principal sources used in the preparation of this nomination were genealogical and historical materials provided to this author by the owners of the Potts Plantation. These included research conducted for DAR membership applications and other family records, as well as photocopies from the Robert Potts, Jr. Bible. The other sources are cited in parentheses in the text and listed in the bibliography.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 9 Page 54

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 9 Page 55

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number 10 Page 56

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description: The property included in this nomination is outlined on the attached USGS map, Cornelius Quadrangle.

Boundary Justification: The property included in this nomination comprises all the core holding which has descended within the Potts family from 1753 to the present. As the contiguous sketch maps indicate, the greatest portion of the nominated acreage represents a majority of the lands acquired in the 636-acre parcel in 1753 by John Potts, the great-great-great-great-grandfather of the present owners.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Property owner _____
Section number _____ Page 57

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Property Owner

Mrs. L. Rodney Whisnant
Post Office Box 156
Cornelius, NC 28031
704/892-8251

Mrs. Lilyan Smith Hunter
Post Office Box 954
Cornelius, NC 28031
704/892-8698

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Norris Workman
11640 Smith Road
Cornelius, NC 28031
704/896-7693

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number Photographs Page 58

Potts Plantation
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Schedule of Photographs

The following information applies to all of the photographs submitted with this nomination.

1. Name of Property: Potts Plantation
2. Location: Mecklenburg County, North Carolina
3. Name of photographer: Davyd Foard Hood
4. Date of photographs: 3-4 January 1996, 5 May 1997
5. Location of original negatives: North Carolina Division of Archives and History
109 East Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27601-2807
6. Description of views:
 - A. Overall view of the plantation seat (#3), looking north.
 - B. Overall view of the plantation seat domestic grounds (#2), looking northwest.
 - C. Plantation seat hall, looking north/northwest.
 - D. Plantation seat parlor, looking north through dining room into kitchen.
 - E. Dependency (#5), looking northwest.
 - F. Former Smith Road, now a farm lane, looking west with crib (#8) on left.
 - G. Farm field and pasture, looking east toward log barn work area (#7), from in near front of Richard Norris and Jane Whisnant Workman House (#35).
 - H. Granary (#12) at Tenant Complex (#1), looking northwest.
 - I. Tenant House #4 (#16), looking north.
 - J. Smith Cottage barn and work area (#23), looking northeast.
 - K. Potts Family Cemetery (#28), looking northeast.
 - L. L. Rodney and Miriam Smith Whisnant House (#29), looking north.
 - M. Lilyan Smith Hunter House (#31), looking north/northeast.